

BULGARIAN CENTURIES

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BULGARIAN CENTURIES

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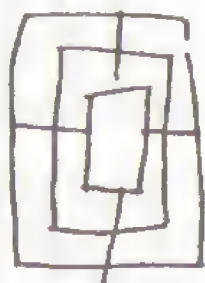
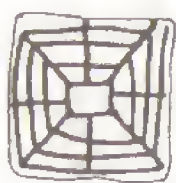
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DEAR READER,

You are holding in your hands the first issue of our journal, "Bulgarian Centuries". The Editors wish to present to you research papers, analyses, opinions, prognoses, and hypotheses about the origins, the ethnogenesis, history, culture, religion, and way of life of the Bulgarians, from the remotest past to the present day.

The chronological and thematic scope of the journal is not an expression of ungrounded pretensions but rather an aspiration for multidimensionality and wholeness, as was the destiny of our predecessors.

The journal will present to you various standpoints, disputable and, at times, mutually exclusive hypotheses. Our aim is to cover a wide range of the multicoloured palette of Bulgarian studies.

To give our readers an idea of who we are and what we want to say to them, the first issue formulates our concept of the journal, the period, and the range of problems that make up the field of research of the Editors. The issue also includes papers presented at the Second Conference, dedicated to the Bulgarians till the end of the 7th c. eld last December. The Conference attracted great interest and was attended by a wide audience.

*The rubric **Reviews** will offer opinions and criticism on newly published books, papers, and monographs of scholars dealing with the problems of the Bulgarians. In the rubric **Pros and Cons**, you can read non-traditional or highly disputable theses.*

*The **Memorandum** states our present position and the avenues of our future research.*

Those who have followed closely our efforts and enthusiasm offered their support.

The Editors

Memorandum

The question of how to enter the third millenium is not a routine question at the end of the elapsing century. It contains the threatening challenge of identification in the globally integrating world.

History, being a study of people and their drama, will never accept a people, whichever it is, to be identified on the video display like a figure in an electronic game. That is why those crowding at the entrance of the reception-hall should always remember the parable that they would be let in only if they have self-respect. For a people to respect itself means to be conscious of its worthiness in commensurability with the worthiness of other peoples.

Worthiness has nothing to do with technological standard or standard of living. It is embodied in culture, not in a distinctive culture closed within stone walls, but rather in an outgoing, interactive, and competitive culture, exemplified in creative social behavior.

A people and its culture survive and live in historical continuity. They can be severed neither by local nor by foreign forces for they are impregnated with the energy of their bearers no matter where they live – in the core of the ethnodemographic community or in its Diaspora. The whole is made up of its parts. Cleo, the muse of History has long discarded all geographical, political, cultural, and religious factors which, by definition, break up this Whole.

4 The energy of a people, which breathes life into its culture, can never be destroyed. It can only abate, temporarily downhearted. Getting rid of the ideological patterns of block thinking, evading the poisonous bite of political passions and of predestination suggested and desired by others under the notion of historical fate, achievements always acquire *national importance*. Such are the contents and goals of noble competition in the field of spirituality – the only battle in which all are winners.

History is not a finished up structure. *It is an everlasting process of creation* in which some are architects, others pile up a stone or two, but not a single name is obliterated.

History is a Reminder, Reminder is Knowledge, Knowledge is Faith, and Faith is Being. It exists as an eternal flow of the historical time of self-realization, a historical time different from that of empires and imperial provinces. No one has the right to judge whether the time of a people is flowing fast or slow. Only the meeting points of the historical times of various peoples, even of extinct ones, structure the rhythm of History.

This rhythm does not breed animosity but quickens mutuality and interaction as the true factors for self-realization. *If someone impedes the self-realization and the achievements of others, he is acting in self-destruction.*

History and the communities formed by its impulses are destined to create those factors disregarding the babbling of those trying to freshen up old ideas-images. Creating new ones cannot reject old myths. The pseudopatriotism of war drums cannot be erased by cynicism, and long forgotten events cannot but substituted by journalistic writings. Facts passed over in silence would not speak up through lobby talks.

History is a sublime tempest when it operates with its genuine categories:

*The Beginning itself, and not its dating on a patch of land;
Statesmanship, and not a military and politic organization;
Power, and not the term of ruling;
Monotheism, and not the dance of the shamans;
Conversion, and not a play in outmaneuvering;
Learning, and not the alphabet;
The Other next to you, and not perfidious neighbors;
Struggle, and not yoke;
The Revival of spirit, and not the misery of outcasts;
Partners, and not reports of diplomats;
The prospects, and not bright future;
And
The World, and not the road to it.*

Those categories are not figures of speech. They are embodied into the texture of Bulgarian History, waiting to be given new meaning and to create new problem circles.

To search for new historical sources and find them is of course important. But how often does a scholar have such opportunities? We must not disregard another option – to re-interpret the facts, which, by way of underestimation or partiality, have created a distorted picture of the existence of the Bulgarians.

A considerable part of the history of the Bulgarians up to the 7th c. is not present in historiography. There is no historic presentation of major parts of the Diaspora of the ancient Bulgarian community. Falsehood and distortion also characterize the image of culture and statesmanship of Bulgarians of that period. There is no appreciation of their role in world social, economic, political, and cultural processes of that tumultuous era.

Our historiography possesses many authentic facts about the period after the 7th c. and the foundation of Danube Bulgaria. But it does not recognize

the extranational character, role and importance of Bulgarian history in the make-up of early Middle Age European culture and this is the key to Bulgaria's integration into modern European culture.

Father Paisiy is said to be the founder of national romantic historiography of the Bulgarians. Each nation has its own father Paisiy and he holds his place not because he was dreaming but because he revived the problems of the past in full awareness of why one must be proud of one's Bulgarian name.

We shall step into the third millenium with dignity and take pride in calling ourselves Bulgarian.

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THE JOURNAL "BULGARIAN CENTURIES" is open for articles, reviews and opinions, which correspond to its scholarly scope.

The article must not exceed 30 typewritten pages, bibliography included (given after the body of the text), or 54000 signs (by computer statistics).

The reviews must not exceed 5 standard pages or 9000 signs.

The written materials may be handed in on a diskette, which accompanies the printed pages.

The materials under review must have been published not more than 3 years before the review is handed in to the Editors.

On handing in materials for publication, authors must provide a short C. V., their title/rank, address and telephone. The text must be signed personally and accompanied by information whether it has been published elsewhere, under what form, in what language, etc. In case of illustrations, the author must contact the Editors on the quality and number of illustrations.

The Editors feel free to reject materials for publication and choose the way to inform the author. Manuscripts remain with the Editors!

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TANGRA TanNakRa ALL BULGARIAN FOUNDATION

For the Editors of the Journal "Bulgarian Centuries"

SECOND CONFERENCE ON "ANCIENT BULGARIANS"

On December 18-19, 1998 the Aula Magna of the oldest school of higher education, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", hosted a Conference, dedicated to "Ancient Bulgarians before 681 – Origins, History, and Culture. History of Volga Bulgaria". The Conference was organised by the Faculty of History of Sofia University and TANGRA TanNakRa ALL BULGARIAN FOUNDATION.

During the two days of the Conference the audience listened with exceptional interest to the 29 papers of outstanding Bulgarian scholars. Among them were Assoc. Prof. Dr. Peter Dobrev, Professor Dr. Georgi Bakalov, Prof. Dr. Sc. Vassilka Tapkova-Zaimova, Prof. Dr. Sc. Kazimir Popkonstantinov, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Plamen Tzvetkov, Dr. Tzvetelin Stepanov, and others.

The Conference ended with a heated discussion on the problems of ancient Bulgarian history and culture, the place and role of Bulgarians in the formation of European civilisation.

The next issue of the journal "Bulgarian Centuries" will publish the most interesting papers.

In his opening speech the Dean of the Faculty of History Professor Georgi Bakalov said:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Faculty of History and TANGRA TanNakRa ALL BULGARIAN FOUNDATION are the organisers of this second conference, dealing with ancient Bulgarians. While the first conference was a test for the interests of younger students of the problem, this one has the ambition to attract a wider range of scholars.

The short notice in the 6 books already published by the TANGRA Foundation states that it "explores, publishes and disseminates knowledge, myths, legends, and hypotheses, relating to the Bulgarian ethnos." I insist on mentioning this statement in order to prevent possible critical remarks that some of the hypotheses published are not well grounded. But this is quite normal for scrupulous scholarly criticism.

In its one and a half year of existence the TANGRA TanNakRa ALL BULGARIAN FOUNDATION and its associates are still in the period of systematising and popularising their ideas. This is necessary since the theme of ancient Bulgarians is almost unknown to our public. I hope no one will dispute the fact that in the almost 240 years after the appearance of Paisiy's History Bulgarian and foreign historiography have not been able to offer a clear and plausible answer to the question of the origins of Bulgarians.

The well known hypotheses, from beginning of the 16th c. to the present day, about the genesis

of the Bulgarians (Scandinavian, Volga, Slavic, Sarmatian, Ural-Altaic, Hungarian, Tartar, Chuvash, Finno-Turkic-Slavic, Finno-Ugric, Finno-Chud, and Turkic-Altaic) speak of squandering of intellectual potential.

The disregard for poorly interpreted data in historical sources contributes to the formulation of a wrong hypothesis about the nomadic and stock-breeding character of Bulgarian culture, contrasted with the settled way of life of the Slavic farmers. Towns, architecture, calendar, State institutions, philosophy of religion of the Bulgarians simply do not find their due place in official historiography.

Inertia in the treatment of these problems led to the establishment and spread of the historically improbable placement of the Beginning of Bulgarian history in 681, as if before that date Bulgarians did not exist. What is more, 17 years ago the official institutions, with their typical pompousness, organised a grandiose celebration of the 1300th anniversary of the Bulgarian State. Few were those who tried to explain to the public that this is true of the State on this side of the Danube and not of the genesis of the Bulgarians in general. In this way hundreds of years of Bulgarian history were obliterated since this interpretation was called upon to support the incorrect thesis of the Slavic-Bulgarian community.

Our denial to recognise a period of our history that cannot be deleted puzzles some foreign scholars of Bulgarian antiquity. This is not the place here to discuss the ideological and political reasons for that, but its beginning can be set as early as the

National Revival. I have to remind though that the unreasonably long silence of our medievalists opened wide territories for numerous unscientific, fantastic and even funny theories, and discredited the problem of Bulgarian antiquity in general.

We had everything on the market. Bulgarians turned out to be in the roots of Shumerian civilisation, they were the Hixoses in Egypt, the Philistines in Palestine, the Normans in Scandinavia, they were among the builders of the pyramids and the culture of pre-Columbian America. The list is even longer. Some "specialists", without any hesitation and contrary to any logic, put the beginning of Bulgarian history, using this term, 4000 years back. It would be much better to say that we have knowledge of a considerable group of peoples with history as ancient as that of the Bulgarians. But to claim that documentary data support a 4000-year history of Bulgarians is out of the question. This would be simply a distortion of facts that has already given birth to amazing hypotheses. Philology is a very serious science and one must use its apparatus only if he is well acquainted with it. Otherwise you can come up with odd theories.

It is this state of affairs and the inadequate reactions of official scholarly circles that made us speak openly and with the necessary seriousness about the origins of Bulgarians. This was the reason to establish the journal "Bulgarian Centuries".

*I wish you all success at the
Conference!*

It is common knowledge that to resolve a problem of science one needs two prerequisites – adequate data and the right method. Information about the origins and the land of ancient Bulgarians has been very scanty. This has given life to many contradictory and mutually exclusive hypotheses. Things have changed, however, in a

of origin one and the same place – the region of a mountain, called Imai or Imeon in the past.

The best source of this kind – the chronicle of Patriarch Michael of Syria – tells how, once upon a time, the tribal group of the Bulgarians came out of the gorges of the mountain Imeon, situated in the

THE ORIGINS AND THE PROTOLAND OF THE ANCIENT BULGARIANS

ACCORDING TO COMPLEX DATA¹

Dr. PETER DOBREV, Senior Research Associate

favourable aspect. We have now new sources that can be provisionally divided into the following groups:

First, direct historical data about the location of the oldest Bulgarian lands.

Second, a group of facts about the material culture of ancient Bulgarians.

Third, entirely new linguistic data, including recently discovered inscriptions in the language of Bulgarians.

In view of this diverse information we can venture an answer to the question: where is the land of origin of Bulgarians? What do the new data indicate?

The most important characteristic of the data is that all ancient chronicles, mentioning the Bulgarians, point out as their land

southern part of Central Asia, and reached the river Tanais (the Don)² in 60 days. We can easily explain why this extremely valuable document about the origin of Bulgarians was lying among Syrian historical manuscripts. In the remote past the Syrian Church had its municipalities far in the East, in Central Asia. Thus knowledge of Syrian scholars about the peoples of that region was far more detailed than

¹ This is the full text of the paper presented at the Conference held at Sofia University on December 18-19, 1998.

² Langlois V., *Chronique de Michaelle Grand*. Venise, 1868; J. -B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michele le Sirien, patriarche Jacobite d'Antioch*. Paris, 1904; J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge*. Leipzig, 1903, s. 479-485.

that of early European historians. Best among all translations of the chronicle is that in French, done by J. - B. Chabot and mentioned in 1915 by Prof. Vassil Zlatarski as most accurate since it contains concrete historical and geographical details.³

We read in this most reliable translation that the Bulgarians literally came out of the gorges of Imeon (in French *depuis les defilés de mont Imaeon*). We follow Prof. Zlatarski, who considered this to be an indication that Bulgarians inhabited the northern slopes of Imeon – the part closest to Europe.

Other sources, which directly mention the land of Bulgarians, also point to this region. In the words of Agathius of Mirinea the Kutrigurs, the Utigurs, the Ultizurs, and the Vurugunds once lived on this side of the mountain Imai in Asia, i.e. along the northern slopes of Imeon. There are also two reports of Theophilakt Simokata. One of them tells that the tribe of the **Kotzagirs**, their name close to that of the Bulgarian branch **Kuchi-bulgar**, also came from these parts of Asia. In the other we read that in the seismic zones, neighbouring on Sogdiana, an ancient Eastern State near Imeon, there existed the old Onogur town of Bakat.⁴

³ Cf. В. Златарски., *Известието на Михаил Сирийски за преселението на българите. Избрани произведения. Т. 1, С., 1972, с. 57, where, on the basis of textological and chronological comparative analysis of other historical sources, he concludes: "We think that in this case the translation of Chabot is accurate..."*

⁴ Златарски В. Н., *op. cit.*, pp. 57-59, and Haussig. *Theophilakt's Excurs. Byzantion*, 1953.

In his study on Theophilakt, called "Theophilakt's Excurs", the German scholar Haussig claims that Imeon was the name of a mountain range in the western parts of Central Asia – Pamir, Hindukush and Paropamiz.⁵

To all this we can add a new set of data drawn from a recently published copy of an Armenian Geography, with maps, called "Ashharatzuitz" (Land description). According to this source there lived, between Persia and Turkestan, 15 highly developed peoples, dealing with craftsmanship and trade. First among them are mentioned the Massagets, known from the 6th c. BC. Second come the proto-Bulgarians. On the map of Central Asia, compiled by Acad. Eremyan in accordance with this copy, the lands of the Bulgarians, bearing the archaic name "Bulh", are located directly along the foots of the mountain Imaus–Imeon, in the territory, encompassing the area of present-day Tadzikistan and Eastern Afghanistan⁶ (see map).

An interesting source is also the Anonymous Chronograph of 354, in which the name **Bulgarians** appears as a kind of substitute for the name of the Baktrians – ancient people living near the Imeon.⁷

⁵ Haussig Н., *op. cit.* p. 297.

⁶ Армянские источники по истории Средней Азии. М., 1975. Приложения, карта 1 "Средняя Азия по Ашхарацуйц", автор акад. С. Еремян.

⁷ Cf. *Weltchronic geschrieben in 354. Leipzig, 1880; Liber generationis. MGH, AA-9; also ЛИБИ, т. 1, БА Н, 1960; П. Добрев. Прабългарите. Произход, език, култура. С., 1991, pp. 7-16, where we have the first Bulgarian translation of this part of the Chronograph, which refers to the proto-Bulgarians.*

These are so far the direct sources for the location of the Bulgarian land of origin. All of them point to one and the same place – the lands along Pamir and Hindukush, called in the past Imeon. I have to stress that to this very day we have no direct source, in which the protoland of the Bulgarians is located in a different region in Asia – Mongolia, Southern Siberia, or elsewhere. Naturally scholars, trying to find this protoland far in the East, are forced, first of all, to identify the Bulgarians with some other people – Dinlin, U-ge, Pu-ku (which is in fact the Kirgiz tribe Bugu) and then claim that the Bulgarians came from these parts.

Let us now discuss the second group of data – material culture. Most interesting here are the facts discovered in the Caucasian Chronicle “Derment-name”. It tells us that the builders of old Bulgarian towns in the Caucasus (called respectively Balkar Balk, Humar, Kumuh, and Anzi) came from the east, from the lands beyond the Persian region of Horasan. We even have the names of the concrete settlements from which the founders of the towns, already mentioned, came. Thus the inhabitants of Kumuh came from Kulab – a town that still exists in Tadzikistan, in the foots of Pamir. The inhabitants of Sabur came from Ispahan, and those of Balkar Balk from the ancient town of Balh, still existing in Afghanistan, to the north of Hindukush.⁸ Relying on these data we can draw only one conclusion: the Bulgarians, who built Balkar Balk and the rest of the towns, have lived once in Pamir and Hindukush, as direct sources also testify. Bulgarians were

so closely linked with their old towns in the East that they transferred their names to the new land in the Caucasus.

We notice the same fact with Bulgarians, who moved from the Caucasus to Armenia, lead by their chieftain Vanand. According to early sources, recently interpreted by Assoc. Prof. At. Stamatov, the following Bulgarian toponyms appear in Armenia only after the coming of the Bulgarians – a regional centre with the name Balk, a fortress with the name Vanand, and a mountain called Parhar (before the coming of the Bulgarians called Pariadr⁹). The three names have close analogues in the region of Pamir and Hindukush. These are the already mentioned Balh, the mountain of Parhar, not far from Kulyab, which appears in the inscription from Surh-Kotal, as early as 1st c. AD.

Roaming about the world, Bulgarians obviously cherished dearly the memory of their towns and enlivened their names on each new territory – two times the name Balk, three times the name Bulgar and Bulgar Balk, etc. Thanks to this tradition today we can identify retrospectively, by means of names, transferred to the Caucasus and Armenia, the location of their land

⁸ Cf. Дербент-наме. Махачкала, 1980, р. 20-55, and also the commentary concerning the settlements, published in: Петър Добрев, *op. cit.*, p. 17-22. Some early sources about the same chronicle and more specifically about the town called with the double name Bulkar-Balk or Bulgar-Balk are published also in the book: Д. Димитров. *Прабългарите по Северното и Западното Черноморие*. С., 1987, pp. 44-45.

⁹ Стаматов Ат., *Темпора Incognita на ранната българска история*. С., 1997, pp. 56-57.

of origin. Data show that this was the mountain Imeon (Pamir and Hindukush). Wherever they went, the Bulgarians called their big towns and even the mountains, by which they settled, with old Pamir names – Balk, Parhar, Humar, Anzi, and others. Had Bulgarians migrated from some other region of the East – Eastern Kazakhstan or Mongolia, they would have taken to their new home names from these far away lands – for example, Balasagun, Harahoto. But not a single name from the Far East can be found on Bulgarian lands in the Caucasus and Armenia. This is a very solid argument that the land of origin was not far in the East, but along the foots of Pamir and Hindukush.

The third group of data, by which we can judge about the protoland of the Bulgarians are the newly discovered inscriptions in the language of the ancient Bulgarians, cut in stone. They cannot be translated with the help of the Turkic languages though they contain some Turkic lexical elements. The French linguist J. Denny remarks in connection with the longest inscription of this type: “One even wonders at times – is this some unknown language, mixed with individual Turkic elements.”¹⁰ The same peculiarity is discussed by the linguist Bernhard Von Arnim, who mentions that only a very small part of the proto-Bulgarian linguistic data can be interpreted as Turkic¹¹, an opinion also

shared by scholars like K. Menges and V. Beshevliev.¹² Attempts to identify this “unknown language”, described in various ways by the authors above, took me too much time. It was possible to go deeper into this key problem only after the accumulation of a small but compact collection of inscriptions, left directly in the language of the founders of Bulgaria – Asparuh’s Bulgarians. For the first time this priceless collection was published by V. Beshevliev as an appendix to the proto-Bulgarian inscriptions, discovered earlier, and written in Greek letters. But for a very long time the collection remained untranslated and uninterpreted for, with the growing of the number of proto-Bulgarian authentic inscriptions, it became clearer and clearer that they can hardly be translated with the help of the Turkic and even the Altaic languages. To give the reader an idea of this very important material we have given below the best preserved inscriptions, left by the Bulgarians in their own language.¹³

¹² Cf. B. Бешевлиев., *Първобългарите. Бит и култура*. С., 1981, pp. 31-32 with references to Menges and other scholars disputing the Turkic origin of proto-Bulgarians.

¹³ Here we present only the well-preserved inscriptions. Thus the reader can have the best impression of the language spoken by the founders of the Bulgarian State – Asparuh’s Bulgarians. To those interested in detail of this new problem we shall offer two additional books: B. Бешевлиев., “Първобългарски надписи”, С., 1979, where one can find all inscriptions, known today, and written in the language of Asparuh’s Bulgarians with Greek letters; the monograph published in English – P. Dobrev., *Universum Protobulgaricum*. New York, Mosaic, 1996, which contains not only the inscriptions written in Greek letters but also a special type of inscriptions written in the Runic alphabet. Analyses so far show that both

¹⁰ Deny J., *Une inscription en langue protobulgare*. REB, 1947, pp. 235-239.

¹¹ B. von Arnim., *Prinzipielles nach Sprache und Volkstum der Urbulgaren*. Zeitschrift für slavische Filologie. X, 1933, s. 351.

ZENTY AΣΣO E

ANZI ZEP A ITZI AΣΣO E

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BOYHΛA ZOAPIAN TEZI

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ZHTKΩH HTZUPΓY BΩYΛE

XΩYMΣXH KUIΠE UNE' TΩUCΣXH

ΦM' ECTPΩΓIN KUIΠE UKZ' TΩUCXI

ΩNΔ' TΩPTOYNA ΠIΛE ZΩΠAN

CTPΩOΓIN KUIΠE K' TΩ YΛΣXH M'

AΛXAZI KUIΠE A' XΛΩUBPIN A'

So far this is the most valuable authentic material, preserved in the language of proto-Bulgarians. Its ancient Bulgarian character is demonstrated by one obvious feature – we find one, two or more regal titles, i.e. those specific regal nominations used only by the ancient Bulgarians and by nobody else in the world. In the second inscription this is the title ZEP A, in the fourth – the title KAVHAN, written as KAYXAN, and in the fifth and the sixth – the titles BOYHΛA, HTZUPGU BWULE

types of inscriptions have one single peculiarity – they contain many words from the East, untypical of the Turkic languages. This is to confirm that the hypothesis of Turkic origin, so popular even today, has many defects.

and ZWPAN, that were very common among Bulgarian regal titles. It is this specific feature – regular use of ancient Bulgarian regal titles, unknown to the Slavs and the rest of the European peoples, that shows how authentic ancient Bulgarian material can help us to identify the land of origin of Bulgarians. Though almost all words in the text can be read easily because of the Greek writing, the translation of the inscriptions proved an extremely difficult task. Its solution is not possible within the traditional and widely spread view that ancient Bulgarians were a Turkic people. No matter that this view is still very popular, the authentic inscriptions leave no room for hesitation – Bulgarians did not speak a Turkic language and hence their land of origin was not in the Turkic steppe but in some other part of the world.

Many years of research have proved that the only region in the East where one can find inscriptions analogous to those of ancient Bulgarians is the region around Pamir and Hindukush, called Imeon in old sources. People of those parts still speak a group of languages that are little known. They bear the cover term “Pamir group” and include the following contemporary languages: *Vachan, Bartang, Sarikol, Yazgulyam, Ishkashim, Mundzan*, and the central Pamir language *Pashto*.

This discovery justified the right of historians to call the valleys and gorges of the mountain Imeon (Pamir) the land of the ancient Bulgarians. That is where they lived and formed their language. Most of the incomprehensible words and expressions of



Map of Central Asia according to the Armenian Geography "Ashharatzuitz" (7th c.) – reconstruction by Acad. S. Eremyan. БУЛХ = the BULH people.

that language like, for example, the expression **ACO E**, the notions of **GILS**, **BOILA**, **JOPAN**, **HLOBRIN**, **ESTROGIN**, are in fact old Pamir words and expressions unknown in the Turkic languages.

The Pamir languages belong to the Iranian type but at the same time, due to close contacts of Pamir people with the Turkic tribes, they contain a number of early Altaic elements. This is also typical of ancient Bulgarian. This explains why individual words in ancient Bulgarian remind one of Turkic and Altaic notions. At the same time it is not possible to translate expressions of that language directly into a Turkic language. Now we can see how the

theory of the Turkic origin of proto-Bulgarians was born in times when there were no ancient Bulgarian inscriptions available.

The explanation is very simple and it lies in the existence of two layers in the lexicon of proto-Bulgarian, as in any other Pamir language – Pamir and Turkic layer. Scholars noticed first the Turkic components while the others, though much more numerous, were ignored. This led to the hurried conclusion that ancient Bulgarians were a Turkic people.

Laying accent on the not so numerous Turkic components, which they were able to explain, and passing in silence the large amount of Pamir words, Turkic scholars present a distorted picture of ancient

garians. They deal with partial information about the object of study and what is more – with its lesser part. At the same time, dealing with such data scholars draw the general conclusion that ancient Bulgarians were of Turkic origin. And this is a gross gnoseological and linguistic mistake.

All facts, contradicting the above theory are evaded or disregarded. It is not mentioned, for example, that ancient Bulgarians did not have Turkic names for most of the animals, horses as well, that the Turkic people did not have the titles **KHANA**, **KAVHAN**, **BOILA**, **BAGAIN**, **JOPAN**, and others. This creates the false impression that the “proto-Bulgarian” problem can be resolved in a Turkic context. At the same time this same problem has long stood open because of incorrect interpretation of linguistic data. The latter has been recognised by many prominent students of Altaic, like K. Menges, L. Bazen, and the already mentioned, J. Denny.

Only after the discovery of the Pamir languages, with their rich lexical resources, it was possible to explain **not only part of the linguistic data but all the data** relating to ancient Bulgarians, especially their tombstone inscriptions. This is a material proof that the language of ancient Bulgarians, until recently taken to be Turkic, actually belongs to the Pamir group and the Altaic elements in it are a subsidiary component.

The specific Bulgarian calendar, which has long puzzled scholars with its odd endings of numerals in **OM** and **EM**, not typical of the Turkic languages, also has much

in common with the Pamir languages. And there is more to it. The terms of reign contained in it cannot be calculated with the help of Turkic translations of the years and months, but come out consistently by the Pamir numerical system. The peculiar Bulgarian name of the year of the Horse, **IMEN SHEGOR**, not familiar to any of the Turkic or Mongolian peoples, proved to be an old word to be met mainly in Pamir and in Bulgarian territories of the Caucasus. Even today many peoples of that region call horses and donkeys with the parallel names of **YIMEL** and **SHUKOR**, **SHEGO**. The old Bulgarian horse-breeding tradition that could find no reasonable explanation on Turkic ground can be now easily explained if we turn to Pamir data. The latter can be yet another proof that ancient Bulgarians were not a Turkic, but a Pamir people.

And one more interesting fact – the tradition of ancient Bulgarians to make use of the Greek alphabet in inscriptions, written not in Greek but in their own language. A similar habit was common, as early as the 1st c. BC, among the people of Hindukush. This is to show that the tradition of proto-Bulgarians to use Greek letters must have been transferred from their original lands in Pamir and Hindukush.

A complementary set of linguistic data, by which we can judge about the origin of Bulgarians, are several early words from the language of the Volga Bulgarians, found in Arabic sources. These are notions like **DALA** (‘marten’), **KALAN SUV** (‘a high hat’), **SUDZUV** (‘honey drink’),

HALDZA ('lake'), **HALANDZ** and **HADANK** ('two kinds of timber'), written down by Ibn-Fadlan in 922, i.e. in an early historical period.¹⁴ All these words, with no exception, are found in the region of Pamir and Hindukush, where the marten was called **DALA**, high hats were called **KALANSUV**, etc. This testifies that the language of Danube Bulgarians and that of Volga Bulgarians is akin to the Pamir group. Still another fact has cropped up recently – the regal names of Volga Bulgarians contained the words **BAT** and **BATA**, related to our word **BATE**, and the word **TAT**, in names like **TAT-IRAN**, **TAT-UGEK**, **TAT-UTYAK** and some others.¹⁵ Both words, **BAT** and **TAT**, not only remind us of our Bulgarian notions, but also appear currently in the Pamir region. In the Vachan and Mundzan languages the word **TAT** means 'father', and **BAT** means 'elder brother'. The reason why Bulgarians used these words of Pamir shape and meaning can be only one – they originated in the land of Pamir. Such kinship terms can be found neither among the Slavs, nor among the people living along the Volga today, the Chuvash and the Kazan Tartars included, for their kin system is of a different sort.

The next type of data, by which we can judge about the land of origin of Bulgarians, come from anthropological research, carried in Bulgaria in the last decades.

Craniological analyses gave an extremely interesting result. Anthropologically the ancient Bulgarians divide into three basic groups and first among them is the Pamir-Fergan anthropological type that developed in the remote past in the foots of Pamir and the neighboring Fergan valley, as well as along the eastern slopes of Pamir in the Tarim basin. This is still another argument in favor of the theory of the Pamir origin of ancient Bulgarians. It invalidates all attempts to look for the Bulgarian land of origin farther east – in Mongolia or southern Siberia. At that time they were inhabited by people, who physically differed entirely from ancient Bulgarians.

This complex of data, coming from different fields of science – history, linguistics, anthropology, contributes to the thesis that the land of origin of ancient Bulgarians must have been the region of Pamir and Hindukush, called by historians in the past "the mountain of Imai, Imaus or Imeon." Following the diverse lines of data we reach this part of the world, in spite of the attractiveness of the idea to look for the origins of ancient Bulgarians somewhere far in the East.

No matter how we look at direct sources of data, the protoland of Bulgarians seems to be Pamir and Hindukush. In their origin they were closest to the old Pamir peoples. As it often happens in history, truth lies buried in the plain words of historians and not in speculative theories of the 19th and the 20th c.

For that reason, as a final stroke to this analysis, we shall look at a more specific

¹⁴ Cf. *Ибн-Фадлан, Пътуване до Волжска България. С., 1994.*

¹⁵ Cf. *Джагфар-тарихи. Оренбург. 1993.*

set of facts – ethnographic data about the people of Pamir and Hindukush. We might expect to find there, more than anywhere else, remote reflexes of the Bulgarian past.

The first ethnographic feature of the people of Pamir and Hindukush is their kinship system – it contains a number of peculiar notions common with those in Bulgarian. For example, the words **KAKA** ('elder sister'), **BATE** ('elder brother'), **CHICHO** ('uncle'), **BULKA** ('bride'), **STRINA** ('wife of father's brother'), etc. and the words of male valor and honor like **LEVENT** ('well-built handsome young man'), **HUSH** ('outcast').¹⁶ Neither Slavic nor Turkic people have these words in their languages but they are still alive in the language of Pamir today. The specific non-Slavic and non-Turkic words for basic types of horse riding and horse race in our language like **TRUS**, **RAVAN**, **DAMLE** are also to be found in Pamir languages. The same is true of a range of adjectives, nouns and verbs: **HUBAV** ('beautiful'), **LOSH** ('bad'), **OBICH** ('love'), **OMRAZA** ('hatred'), **TICHAM** ('run'), **PAZYA** ('keep'), **VARVYA** ('walk'), **KARAM** ('drive'). The most interesting ethnographic fact is that many specific folk costumes and instruments, preserved in this region, have in our language non-Slavic names – the folk costume called **SAYA**, the words **POSH**, **KURPA**, **POTURI**,

TZARVULI, **GAIDA**, **PAFTI**, etc. Similarities between customs and rituals of Pamir people and those of Bulgarians are easy to notice: *survakane* (tapping the back with a decorated cornel twig on New Year's Day), the *martenitza* on the first day of spring, *horse races in spring*, men shaving their heads at weddings and other special occasions. These ethnographic parallels concerning words and rituals of non-Slavic origin come to show that most of the things, which distinguish Bulgarians from the Slavs have come from the East – from Pamir, the protoland of the Bulgarians. It must be noted that Bulgarian still has two parallel names for many important notions, one being Slavic and the other of Pamir origin.

To the Slavic word **KRASSIV** ('beautiful') corresponds the Pamir and ancient Bulgarian word **HUBAV**, to the Slavic **ZUL** ('evil') corresponds the Pamir word **LOSH**, side by side with the Slavic **BYAGAM** ('run') we have **TICHAM**, to the Slavic **DVIZHA SE** ('move') corresponds the Pamir and Horezmeic word **VARVYA**, etc.

In the remote past the region from which the founders of the Caucasian town of Bulkar Balk came was called Balhara. This is testified by the Arab traveler Dimashki who writes: "Balhara, a land to the west of Tadzeh" (Tadzikistan).¹⁷ The name Bulhara sounds somewhat strange today. But we find it three times in the Bulgarian

¹⁶ Cf. А. Грюнберг., *Мунджанско-русский словарь*. М., 1971; *Пушту-русский словарь*. М., 1980; А. Грюнберг, С. Г. Стеблин-Каменский., *Ваханско-русский словарь*. М., 1980.

¹⁷ Димашки. *Нокбат ад-дар*. Копенхаген. 1874, р. 16.

territories of the Caucasus – once in the name of the town Balhar in Dagestan, a second time in the name of the region Balkar – today’s Kabardino-Balkaria, and for the third time in the name of the Bulgarian tribe **CHDAR-BLKAR**. Obviously the name Balhara is not foreign but ancient Bulgarian and it was used to name the land of origin of the Bulgarians. Of the kings that lived in old Balhara only three names are known - Kardama, Ila, and Sasa-Bindu¹⁸, and of the names of nobles only those of Vstam and Vndoi, mentioned in the Armenian sources. What unites them all is their non-Turkic origin and their old east-Iranian (Pamir) roots. We have no direct information about the territory of the old Kingdom of Balhara. But, judging by the size of the towns from which ancient Bulgarians left for their new lands, it covered a considerably large region that included towns like Balh, Kulyab, and Andhoi, and to the south and the west the towns Humari and Ender, whose names were also taken over to the new Bulgarian lands in the Caucasus. The eastern boundaries of Balhara are very uncertain. It is interesting however that 150 kilometers off Kulyab, in the valley of the river Zeravshan, there exists an old estate once called Balgar. It might have been connected, some way or another, with the old Balkara.¹⁹ In the old estate of Balgar, once

subordinated to Samarkand, the rulers had, according to the Iranian scholar Usti, the title of KHAN. According to Chinese sources the title was SUBI. These are two words, which we find in the old Bulgarian title KANA SUBIGI. Therefore Bulgarians not only lived by the mountain Imeon, they also founded their first State there. It is interesting that most of the old Bulgarian titles like KAN, KAVHAN, BAGAIN, TARKAN, JOPAN, are still used among the western neighbors of ancient Bulgarians – the Persians, where they have become proper names.

The time when Bulgarians became a people with their own name is hard to specify. Still there is one indicative fact in this respect. In the already mentioned “Ashharatzuitz” Geography, with maps by S. Eremyan, we find the Bulgarians among the 15 civilized peoples in the region of Imeon. Side by side with them are mentioned the Massagets, the Saks, and the Sogdians – three really old peoples, known from the 6th c. BC. The latter gives ground to presume that Bulgarians were known, with their own name and state, not later than the 6th or 5th c. BC. In the first centuries AD, according to the Armenian Geography, nomads from the east invaded their land. We read about them in the same source: “...among the 15 old peoples – Massagets, Bulgarians, and others...there are also 43 wild Barbaric tribes, one of them being called Eftal (the Huns – the Eftalians), the other is called..., the third ALHON, the other VAL-HON, and the rest bear such Barbaric names that there

¹⁸ *Geographic data of Early Purans. Calcutta. 1974, p. 124.*

¹⁹ *Ибн-Хаукал, Китаб сураат ал-ард. Бейрут, 1964, p. 47.*

is no point in mentioning them here.”²⁰ The clear-cut distinction between Bulgarians and Barbaric nomadic tribes shows that, culturally, the ancient Bulgarians differed considerably from the Huns, the Turkic people and the other nomadic tribes. If we want to present a true picture of Bulgarians in our history textbooks we must stop relating them to the nomadic people of later periods since for the historian of the past the difference between them was great.

The early culture of Bulgarians, before their migration to Europe, will help us explain many other peculiarities for which science has no definite answer. For example, why did they start building towns, immediately after their coming to the Caucasus? Or the well-known products in the markets of the East that bore the name Bulgar

or Bolgar, a noticeable mark of highly developed craftsmanship. Or why, as is known by archeologists, the settling of Bulgarians at the Volga caused such an unexpected qualitative change in agriculture? Instead of using the primitive hoe the population started using the plough.²¹ All this can be easily explained if we recall the fact that the proto-land of Bulgarians was not the barren nomadic steppe but one of the flourishing and civilized regions of the East at Imeon (Pamir). This fact is also mentioned by the Arab scholar Sal Bakuvi, who writes that Bulgarians live where “there are grapes, figs and other fruits.”²² Bearing all this in mind, we can now explain the most amazing fact of the history of Bulgarians – after their settling in different places in Europe they created three

²⁰ The discovery of the fact that proto-Bulgarians were among the most highly civilized peoples in the ancient East, second after the well-known Massagets, we owe to the Armenian scholar S. Eremyan. Analyzing the numerous transcripts of “Ashhartzuitz”, he found that the name, read by earlier students of Armenian texts as “the BHUH people”, must be read as “the BULH people”. The name BULH was attached in the early transcripts of the Geography also to the Bulgarians, who settled in the Caucasus. (Cf. К. Патканов., *Армянская география, приписываемая Ананию Шукарацци*. М., 1876, where we can find the following list of peoples living at the Caucasus – “Hazars, Bulhs (i.e. Bulgarians), Basliks...Alans”, etc.). Thus the name BHUH, written in a wrong way and unintelligible for a long time, suddenly opened itself to scholars. They could see behind it not some unknown people but the proto-Bulgarians, who lived in the East and left many traces in the lands near Imeon. The origin of this strange foreign name – BULH – also proved transparent. Today, one of the oldest peoples of Pamir – the Tadzhiks, call the Bulgarians with the name BULHOR, i.e. almost the same way as they were called in the oldest transcripts of the Armenian Geography “Ashharatzuitz” (Cf. *Русско-таджикский словарь*.

М., 1960, p. 43, where the word “Bulgarian” is translated as “Bulhor”). Unfortunately this very important detailed information remained unknown for a very long time. In this way the most important passage of the Armenian Geography, describing the proto-Bulgarians before their migration to the Caucasus, remained practically untranslated. Instead, scholars used the distorted translation published in the Russian periodical *Журнал Министерства Народного Просвещения* (ЖМНП) in 1883. It contains the wrong name BHUH. If it were not for this translation mistake the difference between proto-Bulgarians and the nomadic people – Huns, Turks and others, would have attracted the attention of scholars. But unfortunately in science one single wrong letter may distort the truth.

²¹ I came across this fact for the first time when preparing the manuscript of my book “Смопанската култура на прабългарите” in 1979. In the last years we have a number of studies of foreign scholars on the problem among which I must mention the monograph “Город Болгар”, М., 1988. It is dedicated to the farming and building culture of Volga Bulgaria and contains very important data.

²² Cit. by P. Кузеев., *Происхождение башкирского народа*, М., 1974, p. 152.

large and powerful States. This is an achievement that no other people in European can boast of. Our detailed analyses of the origins of Bulgarians lead to some important conclusions. The application of the complex interdisciplinary method proved a powerful tool for resolving a complicated problem of our history and protohistory.

The data collected from different fields of science helped to formulate the following three most important characteristics:

First, the land of origin of ancient Bulgarians was in the foots of the mountain Imeon, and not in the Turkic or the Mongolian steppe.

Second, long before their migration to Europe Bulgarians possessed a highly developed material culture, much higher than that of the nomadic tribes.

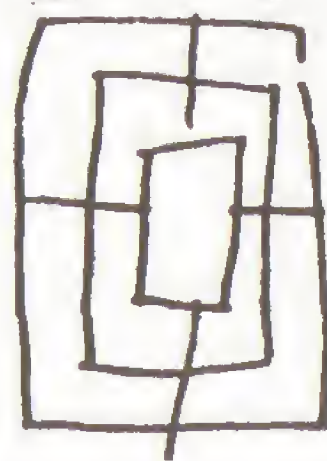
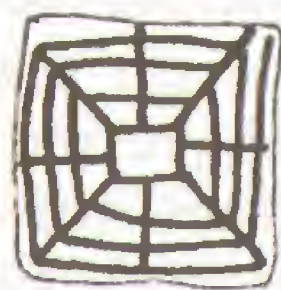
Third, inhabiting one of the most fertile regions of the East, ancient Bulgarians were a numerous and strong people. The illusion of them being a small Turkic horde was created by adherents of the theory of Turkic origin, who could find almost no Turkic words in Bulgarian. Instead of questioning their own ideas, they came up with the thesis of the small number of Bulgarians. In this way they tried to cover, as with a fig leaf, the nakedness of their theory. The fact is that historical sources, describing the Bulgarians, are unanimous – they were numerous. Joseph, Kagan of the Hazars even says that Asparuh's Bulgarians were more numerous than the sands in the sea. At the same time the supporters

of the Turkic theory for many years kept alive the idea of Bulgarians being a very small people. Accepting the idea of the numerous Bulgarians would mean to recognize their non-Turkic origin since a numerous Turkic people could not have left only 10-15 words in their language. If, however, we look not at Turkic but at Pamir languages, where the land of the ancient Bulgarians was, we shall discover many Pamir words and notions. This is a clear indication of the numerousness of our predecessors.

The final conclusion than can be drawn from everything said so far is that the standing theory of the origin and culture of ancient Bulgarians, put on paper in history textbooks, needs corrections in all its postulates. The complex data indicate that Bulgarians were not a small but a numerous people, that they were not Turkic but Pamir by origin, and instead of leading a nomadic life they were expert builders of towns and of states.

It is high time to correct the mistake in our textbooks and to present to the world the true image of our predecessors. The data is more than sufficient, the more so if we turn to the complex of sciences which can give us data about the Portland and the origins of the Bulgarians.

In their journey through time, forced to settle in new lands by enemies or by merciless nature, ancient Bulgarians leave their signs in the structure of territorial communities and settlements. The old signs of the ancestors, handed down from generation to generation, materialize, through their magical and protective power, the link with the forces of Universe and the ancestral spirit. They are at the same time signs of ethnic and cultural belonging. The feeling for continuity is an underlying principle that we all respect. Rulers of great empires, destroyed and rising from the ashes, they knew that even when towns built by them are brought to ruins, the signs cut in stone, written on bricks or tiles remain as milestones along their journey through time. Milestones by which the coming generations will discover them after many centuries... Today we still find those signs along the route of the Great Migration from Asia to Europe. They bear the culture of the East, the sensitivity of different tribes and peoples that started from one and the same place. In their behavior they reproduce the model of the Universe, assimilating the new placement and making it "theirs".



The Chinese hieroglyph for 'town' is a square, oriented by means of a cross that marks the center and the four cardinal points. The organization of space is well pronounced, with its point of orientation and basic compositional axes. The magical meaning of the town is also typical for Hittites, Bulgarians, and Celts. The model of the Hittite capital in Anadola is a circle marked by a ditch and a rampart, which define and delimit the urbanized space.

The ancient Bulgarian model of the territorial community of a town and of the town itself is also a square. In addition to the schematic cross, which determines the four cardinal points, there is the "cross" along the diagonals. This second cross marks the intermediary orientation points (northeast-southwest and northwest-southeast). This sign, related to the building activity of ancient Bulgarians, can be seen cut in stone, engraved on bricks or tiles. We can find it at archaeological excavations, in remains of towns and settlements on the Don, the Atil (Volga), southwest of the Danube estuary, by the Ohrida Lake, in settlements in the Dnepar valley, etc. Long before the

ALIVE ARE THE SIGNS CUT IN STONE...

THE STRUCTURE OF TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES AND FORTIFIED
SETTLEMENTS DURING THE MIGRATION OF ANCIENT BULGARIANS –
A SIGN OF ETHNO-CULTURAL IDENTITY

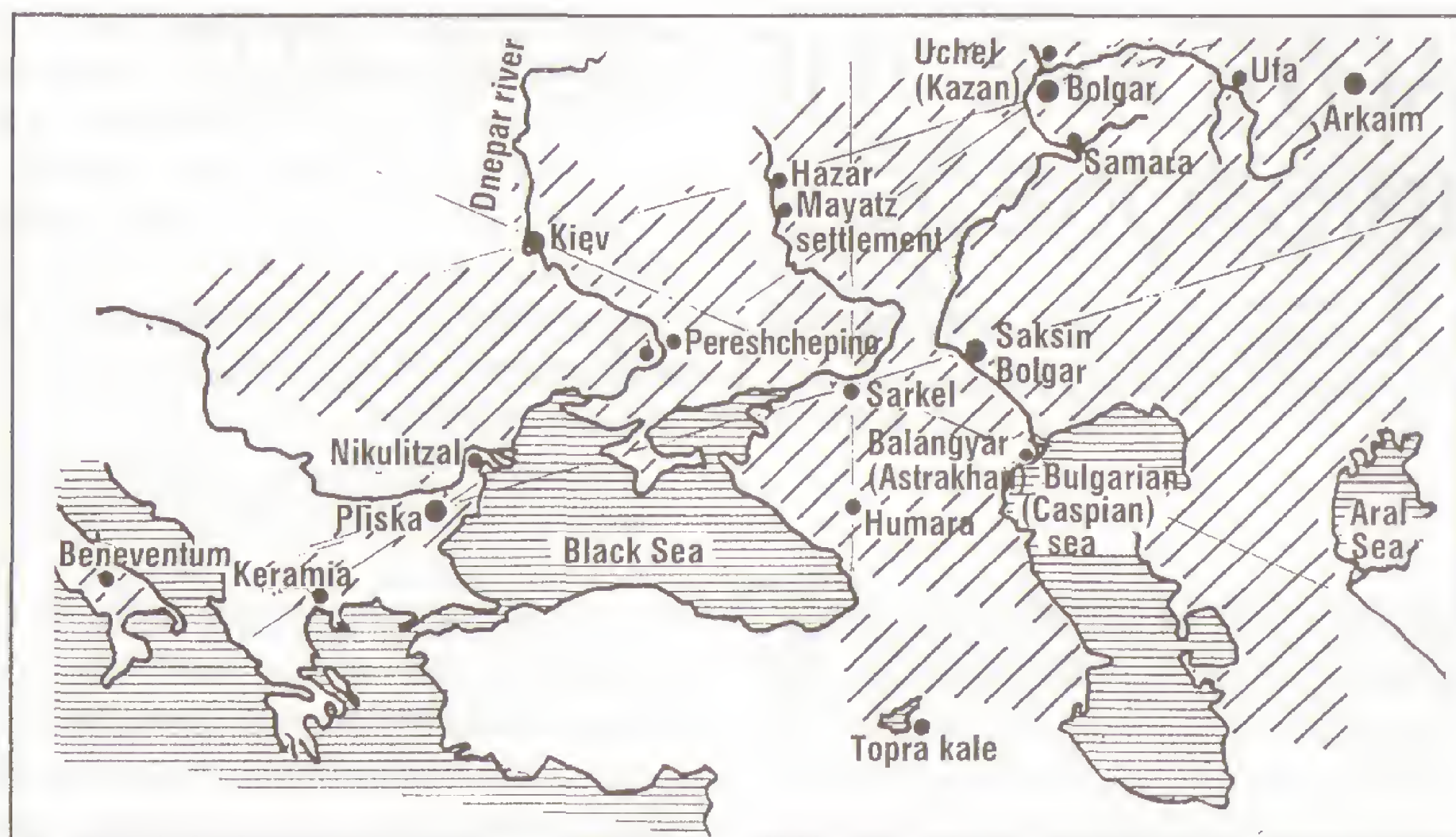
Prof. Dr. Sc. MARGARITA HARBOVA

introduction of ancient urbanistic principles of town building ancient Bulgarians created a unique architectural environment, based on the orthogonal net, oriented with respect to the four cardinal points. Very typical is the scheme of Sarkel on the Don, with its defense system – ditches with ramparts, accommodated to the river as a natural protection. The orthogonal system is oriented along the axis northeast-southwest. An analogical example is the Mayatz settlement on the Lower Don. The perception and reproduction of the model is not in accordance with the terrain, which dictates an entirely different scheme.

For the professional builder “the historical document” is a model handed down from generation to generation. This is the secret, which remains within the tribe or the ethnos, a sign of identity and persistence. Giving proportions, using a unified model in building homes, public or ritual buildings, is a well known practice that is strictly followed. This specific instrument of creating harmony among elements and parts of the building is engraved on the tombstone of the Chargobil Mostich at Great Preslav, as a symbol of

his acknowledged achievements as a builder. The same magical symbol was discovered during the archeological expedition on the Volga and the Don. It speaks of one and the same building and cultural model, characteristic of the East. The ancient Bulgarians came from the East and settled south of the Danube, by the Ohrida Lake and in the lands of what is today Hungary. Future expeditions will discover this model in other places.

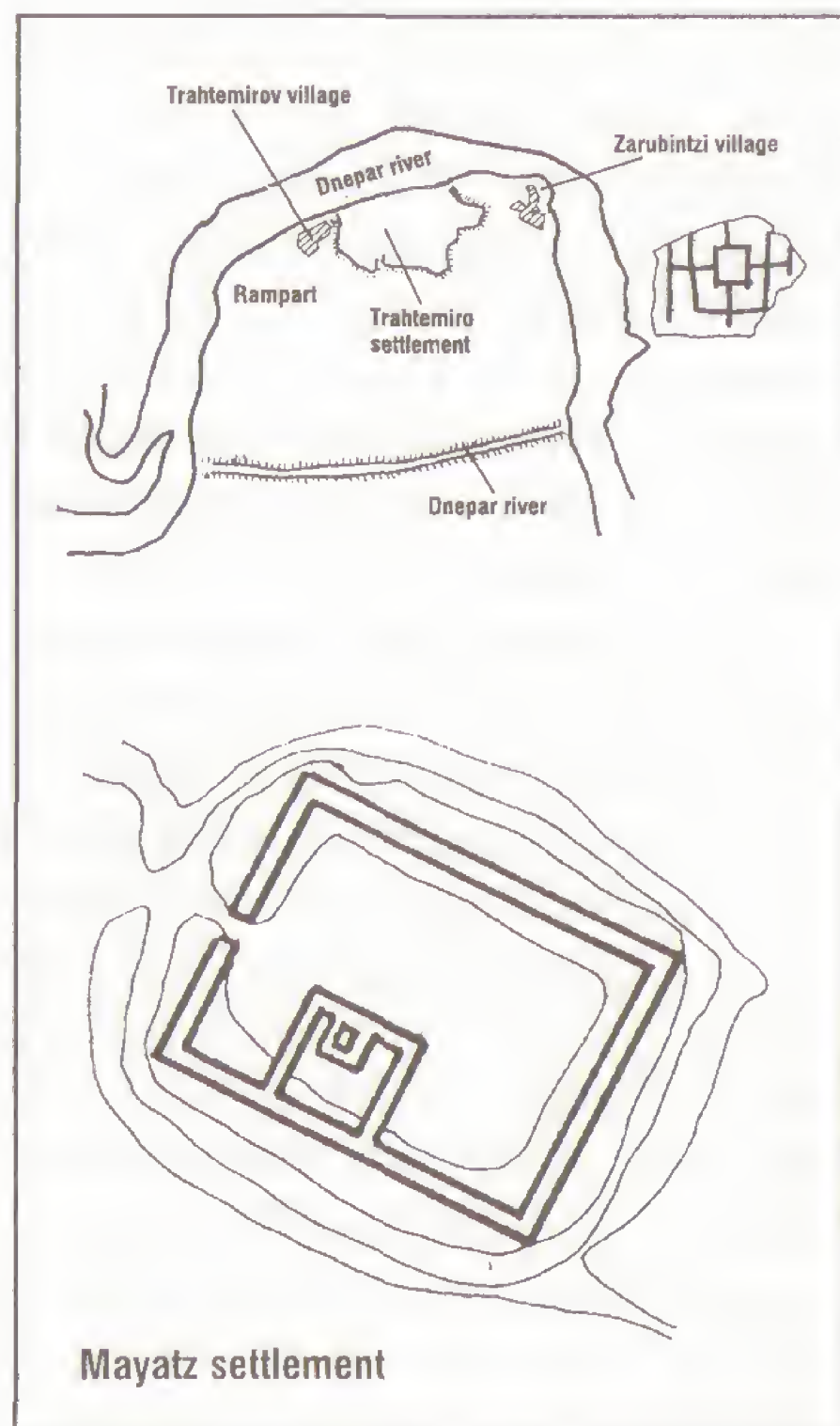
The model with two squares, one inserted into the other, round which we can draw an imaginary circle, is characteristic of the houses of wealthy nobles. It can be seen in Pliska and Great Preslav and is also typical of the Samara period in Mesopotamia. A house and a temple discovered in Choga Mami, northeasterly of Baghdad, follow the same model. There is a great span of time – 6th c. BC and 7th-8th c. Continuity of building tradition is amazing. And still comparative analysis is not yet able to prove that in early times the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates were inhabited by migrating ancient Bulgarians or people of the same tribal community.



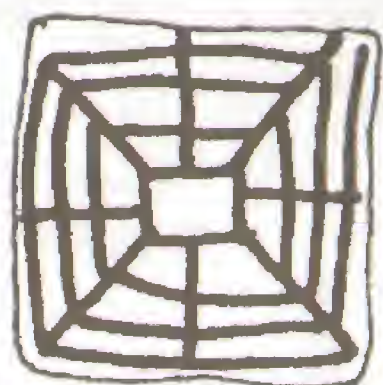
Clearly pronounced, however, is the high culture of building - orientation of buildings to the four cardinal points, hierarchy of internal space, unity of compositional ideal in constructing homes for people and abodes for the gods.

In the Tepe Gaura settlement, south of the Van Lake, archaeologists discovered a house with circular foundation (3800 BC). Its individual rooms follow the orthogonal scheme, as a peculiar reproduction of the circular building. The interpretation of the model is subject to internal regulations, as a sign of ethnic and cultural identity. Both human homes and godly abodes emphasize the role of the center. Its zenith, along the vertical axis, is the place, which makes connection with the Universe.

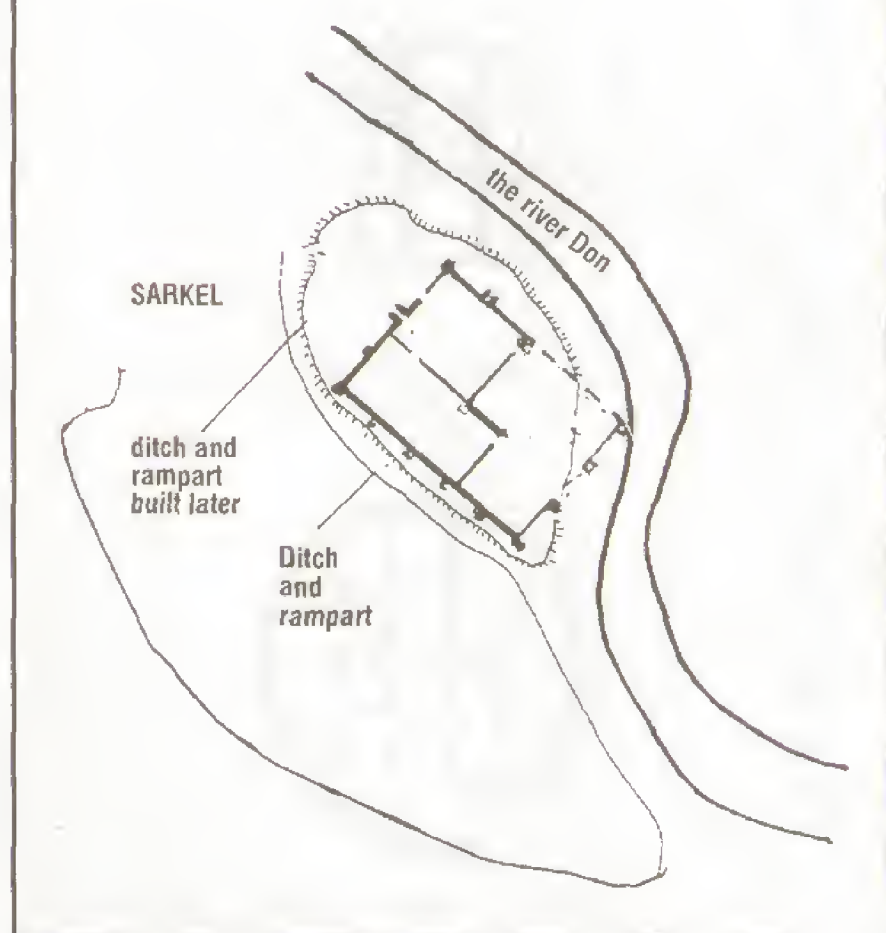
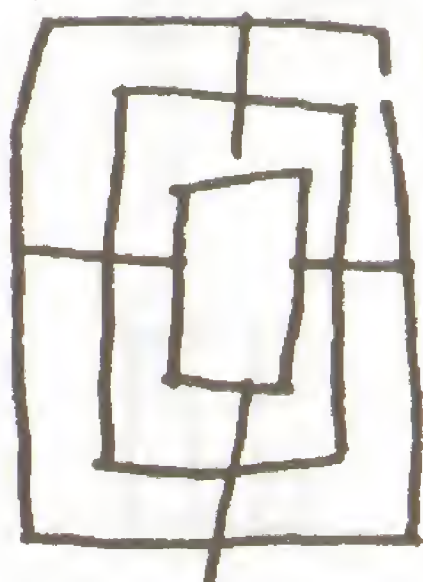
Different places, separated by hundreds of kilometers and the distance of time keep the same signs, cut in stone or brick,



on pottery used in everyday life and religious rituals, reproduced on jewelry and amulets, ornaments on cloth, chain-armor,



Signs cut in brick and stone

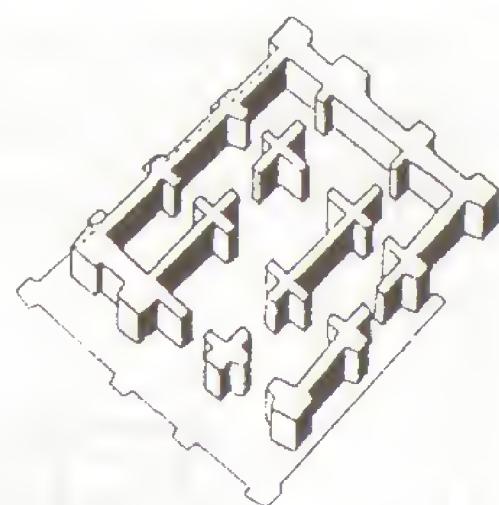


and shields, performing magical and protective functions. Signs on brick, tile and stone, discovered in Pliska, Great Preslav, Madara, Ohrida and elsewhere, can be also seen in Sarkel, in Mayatz and Humarin, on the northern Black Sea coast, along the Amur river (Habarovsk region), the Lena river (Yakutsk region), the North Caucasus, east of the Caspian Sea, called in antiquity Bulgarian sea, in Western Turkmenia, Kazakhstan, etc. Some of the signs on stone and brick represent building archetypes, models of structuring the territory along the basic dynamic axes, with a well defined center.

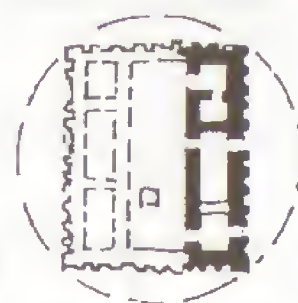
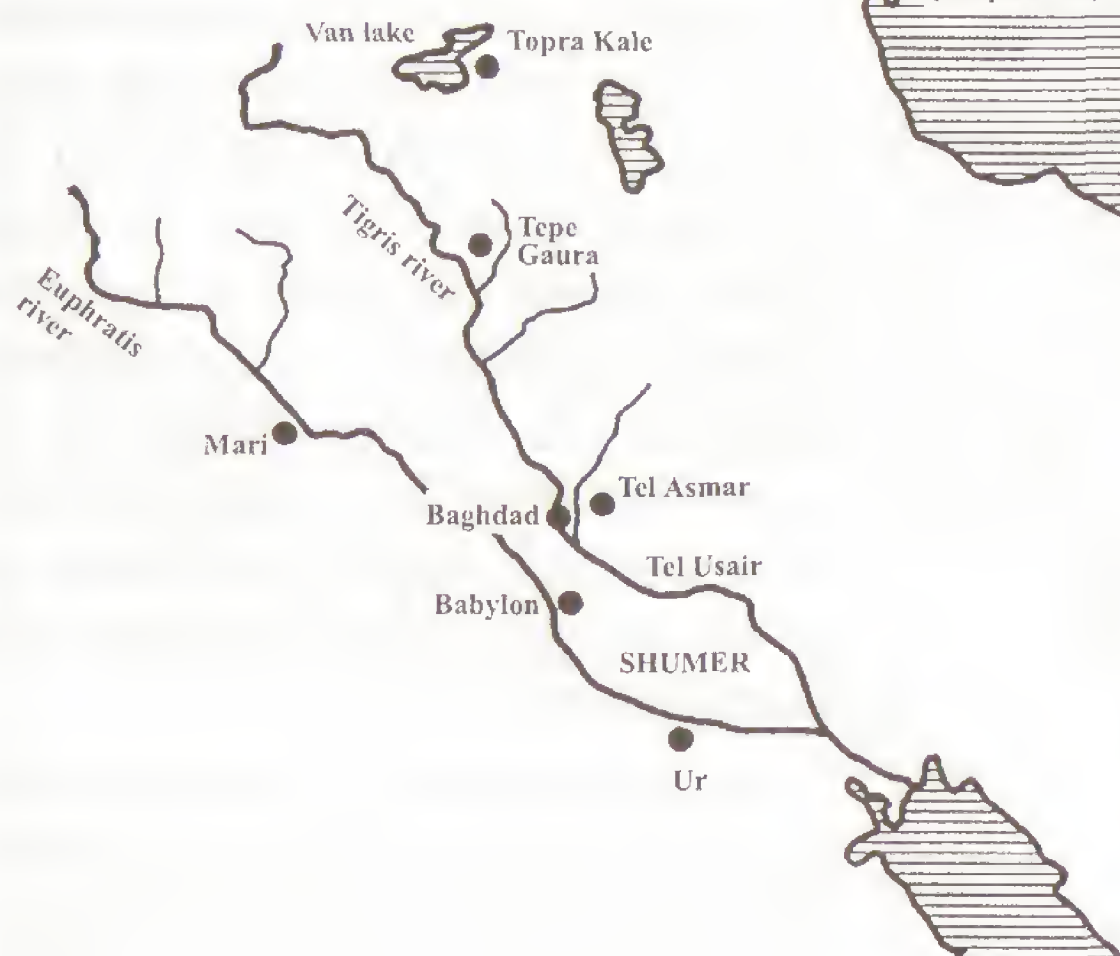
Building signs along the route of ancient Bulgarians are basic milestones in identifying their migration, caused by natural disasters that destroyed their towns, annihilated great empires, covered fertile land with desert sands, turned great expansions of land into small disperse islands, cut off from the mainland. Signs on stone slabs, transferred to distant territories, preserved the wisdom and the message of old tribes and peoples, united in large alliances. All this speaks of high culture, of tradition in building towns and defense systems. Architecture writes the history of an era in its own way, it implants time into architectural space. It leaves signs by which the fundamental idea, the mythological and religious code can be "deciphered". Settlements, homes, temples, they are all localized Universe, placed in geographical space. Unity with the Universe is expressed in the rigid order and harmonious proportions, in the perfect forms, which reproduce Nature



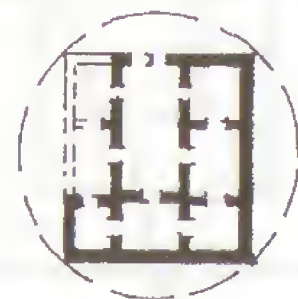
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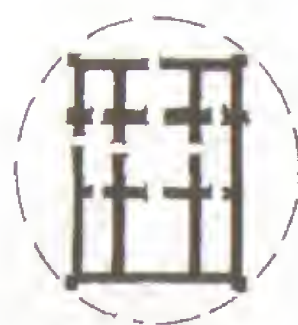
House, northeast of Baghdad, cir. 5500 BC



Temple in Tel Uzair, 3200 BC



House of a noble in Great Preslav, 8th c.



House of a noble in Pliska, 7th c.



Circular house in Tepe Gaura, 3800 BC

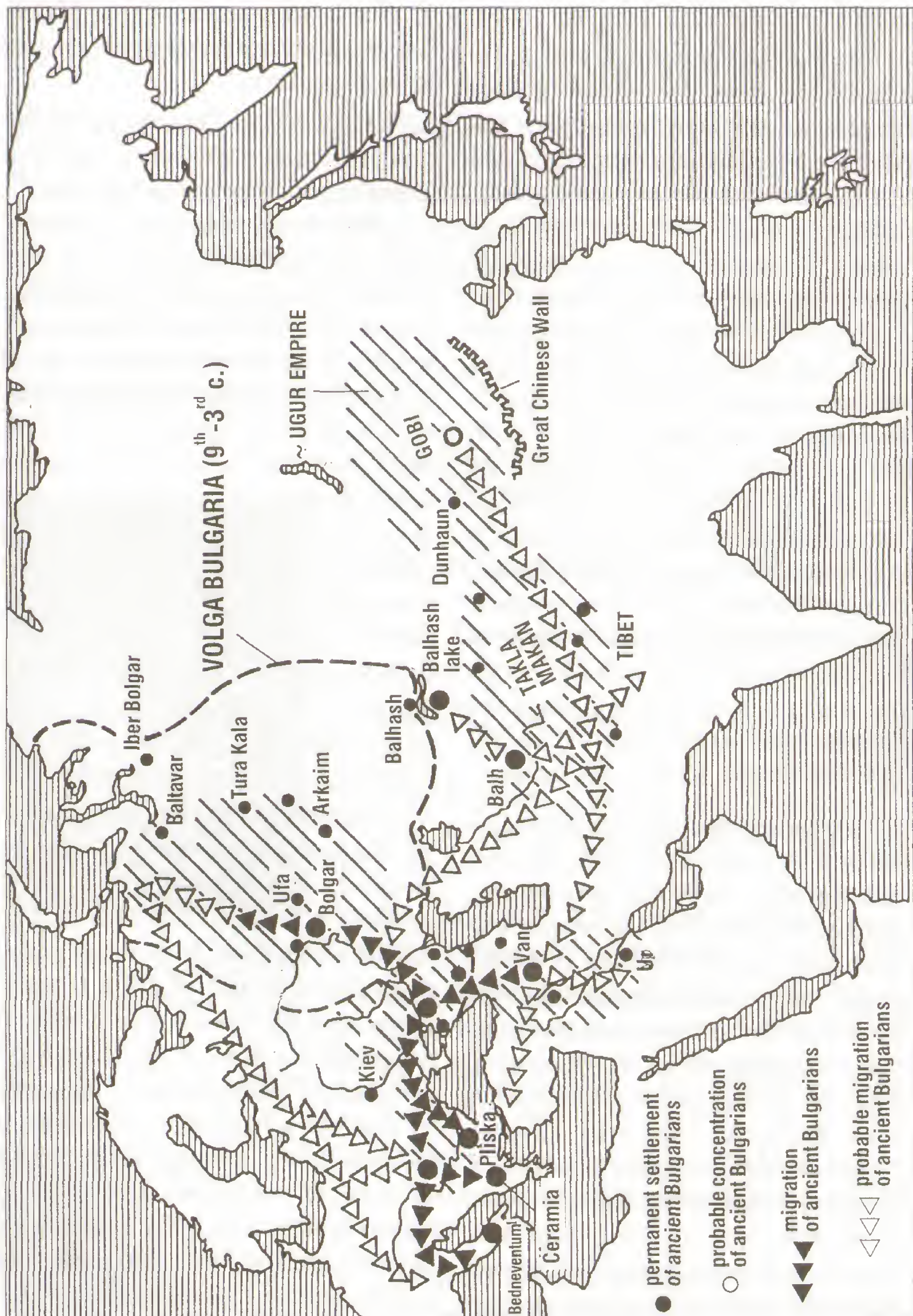
and the Picture of the World.

Is the culture of ancient Bulgarians nomadic?

The claim of Nikolay Genchev that “a principal element of proto-Bulgarian culture is their nomadic old Bulgarian tradition” (1, p. 25) is absolutely groundless.

42

The culture of ancient Bulgarians cannot in any way be defined as nomadic. Proof of this is the structure of their State, their organizational skills, the great States founded by them. Look at the monumental towns and fortresses, protective and defense systems that run for hundreds of kilometers, inscriptions on stone marking their migration before they settled southwest of the Istar (Danube) estuary. Those



are not features of a nomadic life.

The Balkan Peninsula is one of the ethnogenetic niches of the Bulgarians. Here their statesmanship and architectural tradition were imposed on local territorial and settlement structures, on road systems, sacred places and spiritual centers. Their forced "nomadic period", caused by the aggressive marches of the Hazars, their migration from the lands of Great Bulgaria to the Azov Sea, between the Black and the Caspian Sea (called Bulgarian Sea) in the West, to the States they founded on this side of the Danube – Bulgaria of Asparuh and Kuber (northwest of Thessaloniki), to Panponian Bulgaria, did not obliterate the Bulgarian tradition in statecraft and building. Their strive for ethnic and cultural identity, their tenacity, the multiple rise from the ashes, make them stick to the old roots, to cultural heritage and the philosophical foundations of their religion, which seeks its roots in the Universe.

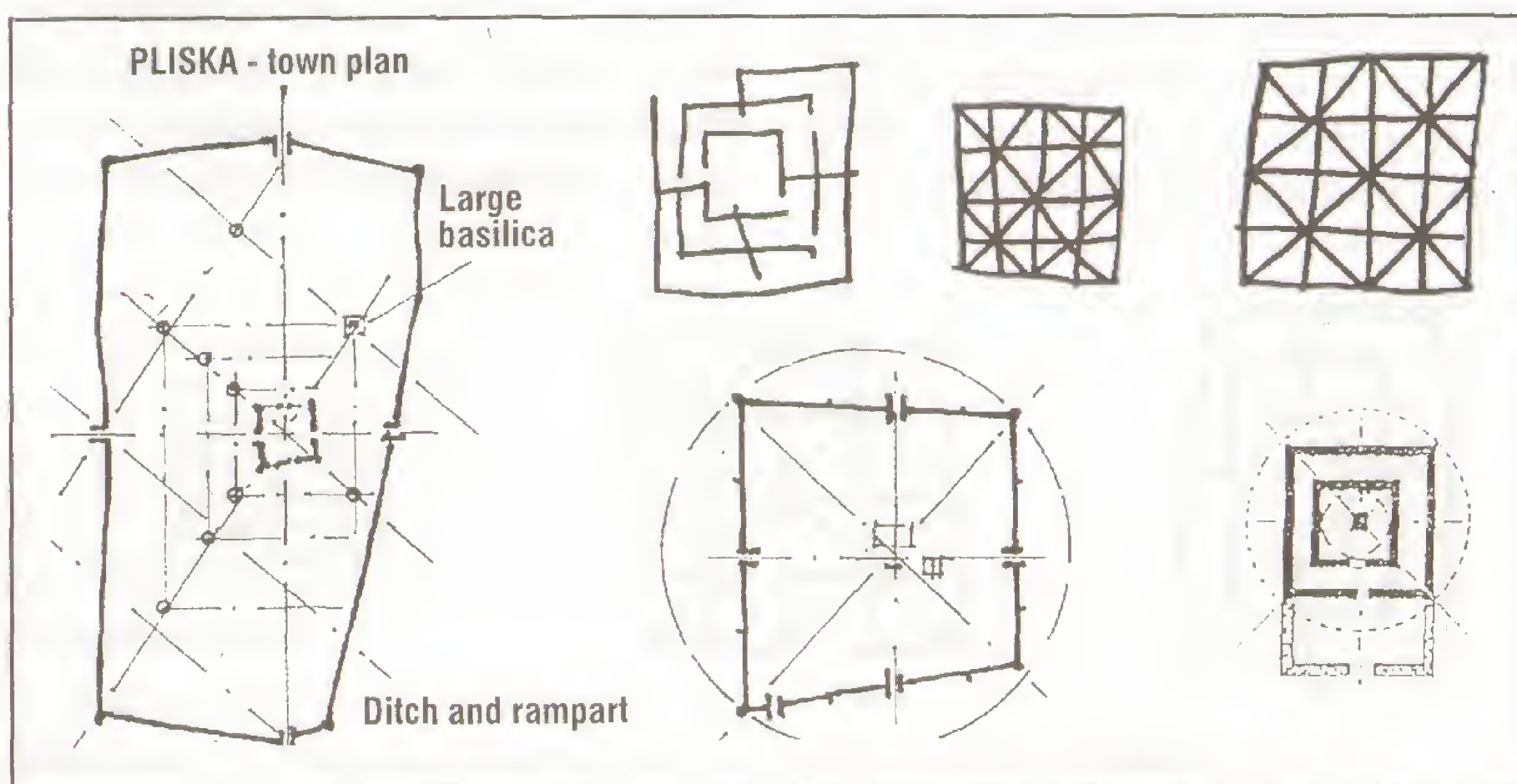
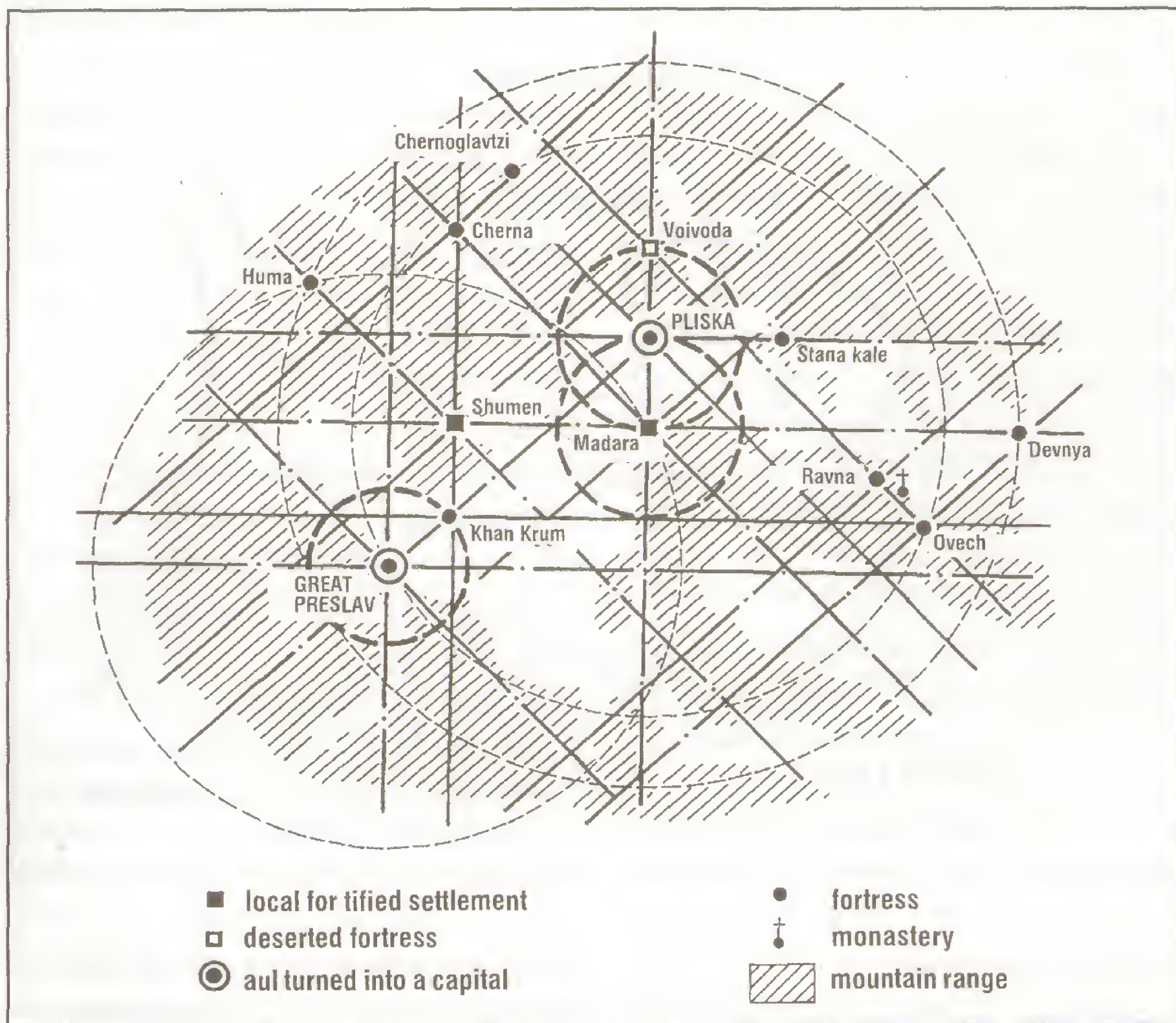
Ancient Bulgarians acquired the local tradition of the new land on which they were forced to settle, but left their own building signs and their symbols. They were to protect them, give them strength and accomplish contact with the spirit of the ancestors. With exceptional skill, probably not without help from the shamans and knowledge of nature, they chose blessed spots to build their settlements, their sacred places and monasteries. Analyzed today with contemporary methods and apparatuses, these buildings demonstrate the strength of the emotional charge. Very characteristic is the foundation of the town of Kiev on the Dnepar, Turnovgrad on the Etar

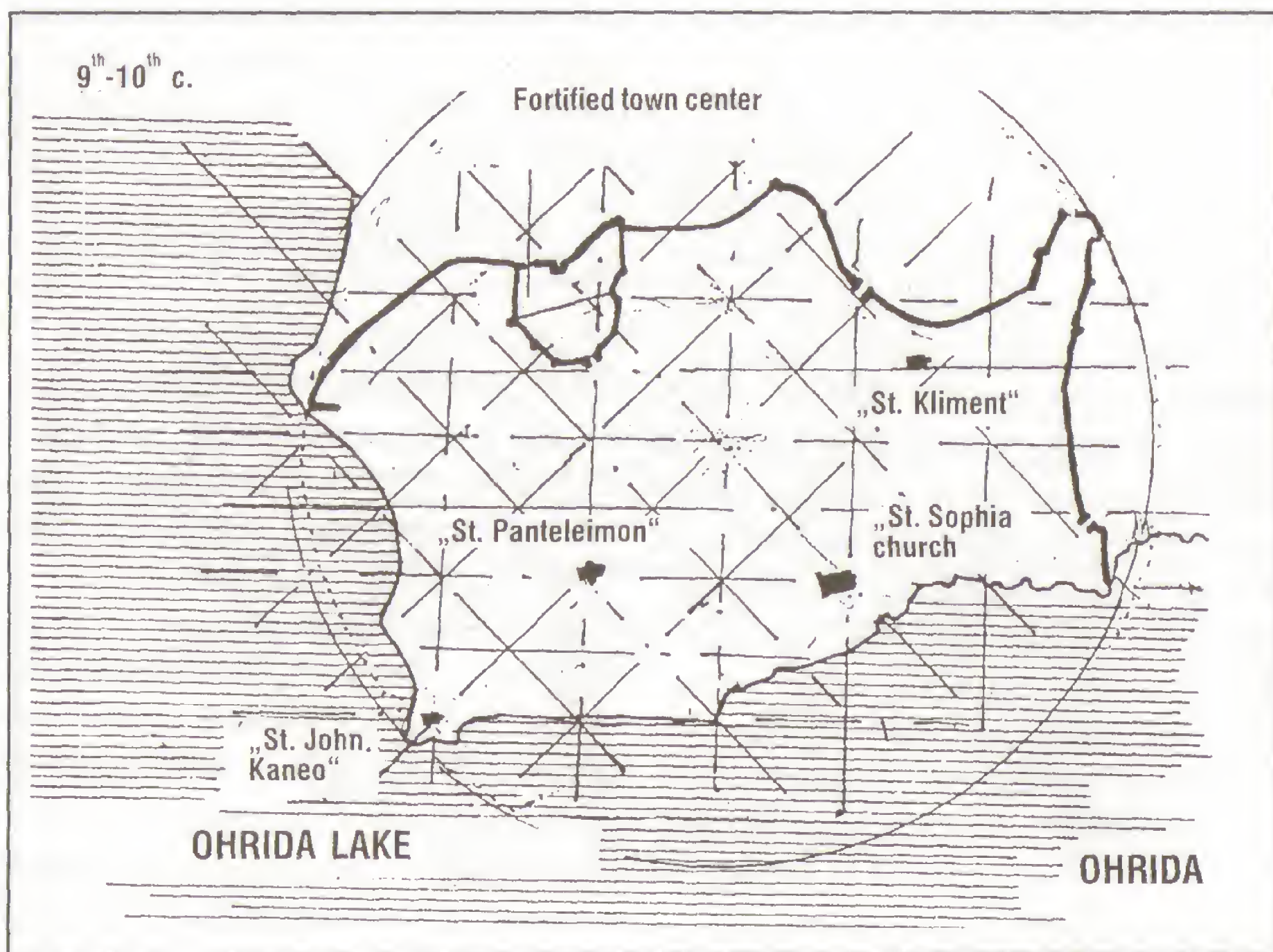
(Yantra), the spiritual centers by the Madara fortress and in the Rhodopes, still keeping the Orphic tradition.

Historical data, archaeological and architectural research of settlements, ritual and cultural centers on the Balkan Peninsula (7th - 9th c) offer urbanistic signs and modules used in the creation of territorial and settlement structures. They can be traced along the route of ancient Bulgarians from Asia to Europe. A characteristic feature is the use of one and the same architectural model in building towns, temples, and homes, for urbanising the territories. The Center is always marked as the focus of spiritual potential. The architectural archetype of ancient Bulgarians is not their unique creation. It also belongs to various communities in the tribal union, in their co-existence and unification.

Bulgarians are recognized masters in building, known for their experience and creative reproduction of the model in a concrete geographical space.

The tenacity of the Bulgarian ethnos is in the magic of the symbol. It is embodied in the structure of the settlement and its adjacent territory, in ritual or public buildings, in decorative ornaments, in the interior, table pottery, in cloths and jewelry, in amulets. Each object preserves its artistic, magical and protective power and has its function in rituals and everyday practices. This cannot be characteristic of nomadic people. It shows the existence and reproduction in time of a centuries-old culture, architectural and urban culture included. The Eastern spirit of the role and importance of art is preserved and this grants architectural ambiance vital-

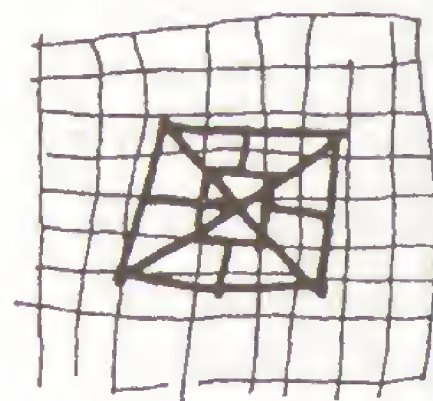
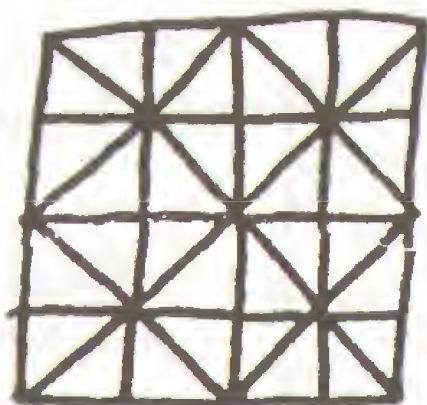
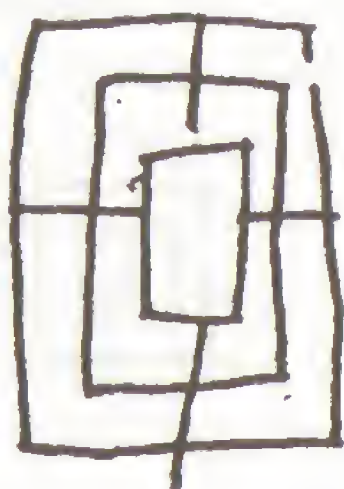




ity and creative power.

The same magical signs cut in stone wall pieces, on bricks, tiles, on interior paint of temples, on walls of caves, mark the route of ancient Bulgarians. For example, graffiti on brick, discovered in the Tzimlyan settlement (Sakrel) in the Cau-

cuses and east of the Caspian Sea, by the Azov Sea and in the Volga valley, resemble those found in Pliska, Madara, Preslav, in Ohrida and northeast of Thessaloniki. They all belong to early Bulgarian culture, mark stability of architecture and folk art tradition, which is later



Building signs from "St. Sophia" church (by N. Ovcharov)

adopted by the official culture.

The symbol of squares or rectangles, inserted into one another, which in proportion are very close to the so-called golden section, is described by archeologists as the “the hopscotch game”. This is an old sign, which might be deciphered as a projection of supreme reason, a sign of harmony and organization of space. The cross sets the four cardinal points according to which homes, temples, and court complexes must be oriented. Very important are the diagonals, which also make a cross and emphasize once again the importance of the Center.

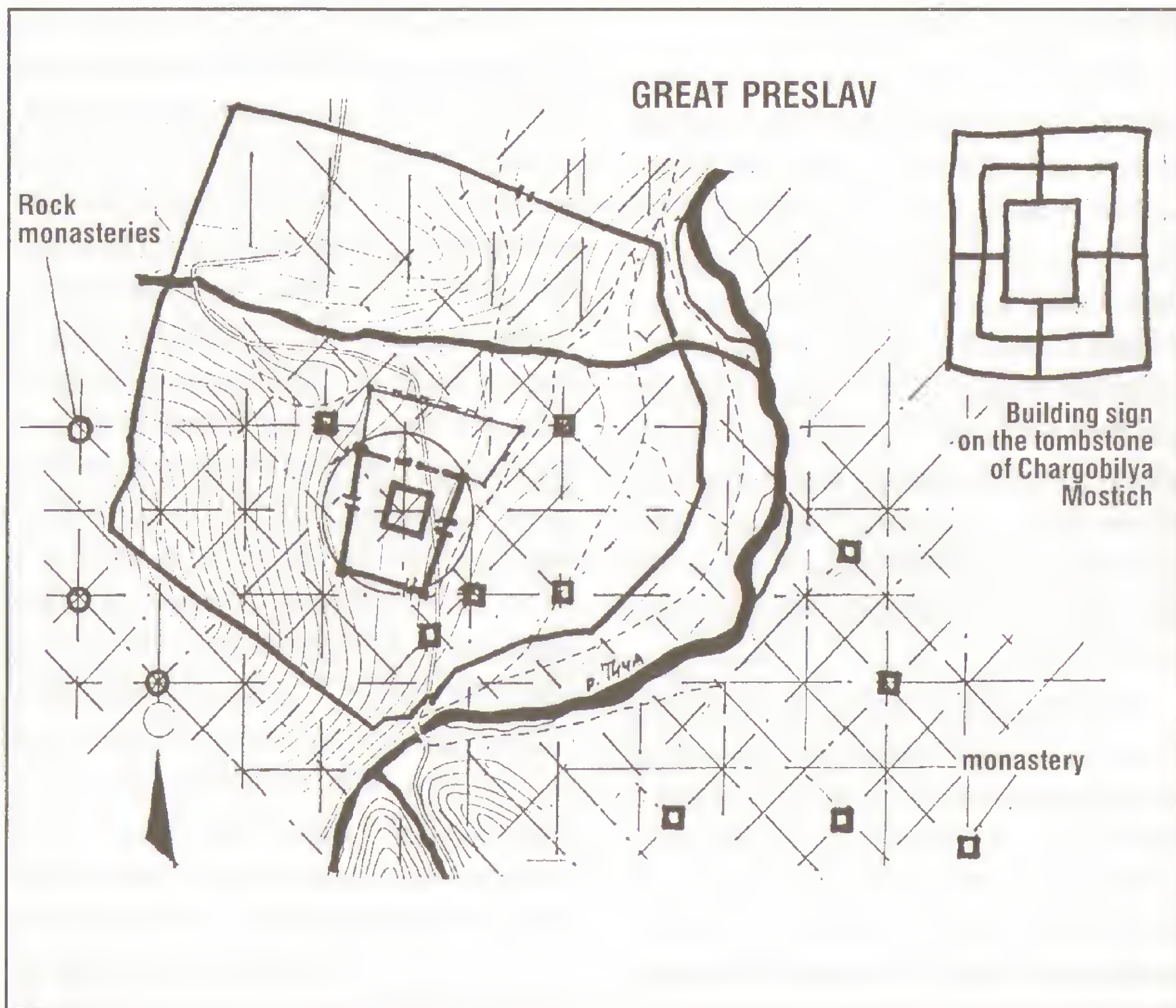
The image discovered in the “St. Sophia” church in Ohrida is highly characteristic. It appears on a marble rim on the west side of the building (according to N. Ovcharov (2, p. 71)). We can “read” it as a model of a newly built fortified settlement or its structural element, resting on an already existing ancient structure, build by the principle of the so-called Hypodam street network. Remember that Medieval Ohrida, in its early period, was built on the ruins of the old town of Lihnidos, turned by the Romas in 168 BC into a road station on the Via Egnatia. According to the newly discovered scheme, the new settlement developed in accordance with the four cardinal points. It imposed its own structural model on the terrain to mark the presence of the ethnic community. If we draw the diagonals the points of crossing mark the location of new centers, directly related to the new town.

The settlement of Isperih’s brother Kuber and the Bulgarians and other tribes

led by him in the so-called Keramian field (the region round Bitolya) is mentioned in Byzantine sources by the name of *Bulgaria*. The population bears the name of *Bulgarians*. They build the capital of the new Bulgarian State - Keramia. Drawings and signs on the walls of rock catacombs, similar to pagan and Christian ones, and discovered by D. Ovcharov in Pliska and Great Preslav, are easy to explain. They were consecutive capitals of the First Bulgarian Kingdom on the Balkans. Graffiti dated by Prof. N. Matzupulos to the 8th - 10th c., prove the early presence of proto-Bulgarians, no doubt Kuber’s Bulgarians, who settled in the 7th c. near Thessaloniki.

The similarity of stylized figures and signs to those found in the southeastern regions of the Balkan Peninsula is a confirmation of a similar way of life, similar religions, analogical artistic and urbanistic views, and the belonging of the artists to the same ethnic and cultural community. In that community the magical is inseparable from the real, from the human being and his environment, from Universe and God Tangra.

The Russian scholars M. Artamonov, S. Pletnyova and others admit that drawings of animals and signs, discovered by them at archaeological excavations on the Volga and the Don, look very much like those in Pliska and Preslav. S. Polyakov offers solid arguments in favor of the existence of close contacts between the eastern Azov region and the Caucasus, resulting from the spread of Bulgarian culture.



Artistic images and scenes of exceptional liveliness and proportions cut in stone and brick, and painted on pottery, have their ethnic identity. Found in different places, often very far apart, they have the same historical root, related to the presence of compact Bulgarian population. Their presence, in addition to town structure, inscriptions in stone and historical data, marks the settlement, for a shorter or longer period, of Bulgarians who usually created their own state organization and urban environment, their Center.

Byzantine chronists write that ancient Bulgarians believed in the Sun as a living being, they believed in the Moon and the stars, and read their fortunes by them. But these chronists had no eyes for their building skills, which embodied the signs of sacred things, the places where one had to wear the "sun amulets", for the metal buckles with protective signs on them. The position of the sign on table pottery, objects made of bone or produced as ornaments - all results in a neat systems, which is strictly followed.

In their environment Bulgarians were surrounded by artistically interpreted magical signs, incrustated in multicolored ceramic tiles, covering the walls of religious, public and residential buildings, in the floor tilling – colorful and lively, in capitals of columns and stone friezes, in ornamental and plastic decoration. All this created pleasure to the eye and security, because of the protective function of the symbol. It supported the feeling of ethnic identity of the community.

While for the Chinese, as already mentioned, the sign for a town is a square with a circle in it, the building archetype of ancient Bulgarians emphasizes the directions, both main and secondary. They are marked by the diagonals of the cross, which pass through the same center and also form a cross. This sign was discovered in Pliska and Sakrel, in Great Preslav, in Madara and the Mayatz settlement, in Ohrida and Kiev, in Balh and the sacred city of the Bulgarians - Arkaim. This is the model to look for as a sign cut in stone, brick, tile, on pottery, amulets, as an urban conception and spatial organization. Together with historical documents, stone inscriptions, legends and myths, the model can serve as a specific “instrument” for identifying the route of ancient Bulgarians.

The suggested scheme of the route of Bulgarians is based on speculations and individual data. It takes as a starting point the Gobi desert.

Undoubtedly building signs, left along this route, some to be discovered in fu-

ture excavations, will serve as major instruments in revealing Bulgarians as builders with the right feeling for territorial structure and state organization, with love for harmony in art.

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2. Овчаров Н., *Проучвания върху средновековието на Вардарска Македония. С., 1994.* (The author, however, takes the scheme to be that of the “hopscotch” game).
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4. Поляков С., *Этническая история северозападной Туркмении в средние века. М., 1973, р. 141.*
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AVITOHOL - A HISTORICAL PERSONALITY OR A MYTHICAL FIGURE?

Dr. TZVETELIN STEPANOV

50 With the publication in 1866 of the so-called *List of Bulgarian Rulers* A. N. Popov disclosed to the public probably the most interesting and much disputed monument, which contains information about the oldest period of Bulgarian history.¹ The List did not exist as a separate work and was included in the composition of the so called *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*. Today we know of three Lists in this *Chronicle*, which also includes our *List*. All of them are included in the Russian chronograph, dated to the end of 14th-beginning of 15th c. (the late date of the chronograph, connected with the inability of the scribe to understand the initial texts of the *List* and the content hidden in it, deserves special attention, but we shall not dwell on this here). The chronograph relates of various events of world history, beginning, traditionally, with the creation of the world and ending up with the rule of the Byzantine Emperor Roman Lakapin, i.e. until the middle of the 10th c.²

¹ Попов, А. Н. Обзор хронографов русской редакции. Вып. 1, М., 1866, p. 25-27.

² Горина, Л. Проблемы "Именника болгарских ханов" как части Эллинского летописца. — *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 1, p. 13.

Despite its conciseness, the *List* has been the object of many interpretations since it offers information about the system of Bulgarian chronology³ and about the language of Bulgarians.⁴ It informs about their rulers until the middle of the 60s of the 8th c. and the chronist tradition in Bulgaria in early Middle Ages.⁵ We must mention at the very beginning that the goal of the *List* had been to disclose the genealogy of Bulgarian rulers and that of their State, founded south of the Danube⁶, and its place in the history of the world.

It is not at all easy to write about this monument since it has been analyzed by scholars like J. Markwart, J. Burry, V. Zlatarski, J. Mikola, O. Prisak, V. Beshevliev, Iv. Duichev, and many others.

³ Москов, М. Именник на българските ханове (Ново тълкуване). С., 1988 — offers a precise review of all opinions on the problem till the middle of the 80s of this century. Cf. also Добрев, П. Преоткриването на прабългарския календар. С., 1994.

⁴ Pritsak, O., *Die bulgarische Furstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren*. Wiesbaden, 1955.

⁵ Каймакамова, М. Българска средновековна историопис. С., 1990. P. 59 and fol. The author gives a synthetic review of the studied aspects of the *List*.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

As to the forefather of the Bulgarians, Avitohol, as mentioned in the *List*, we could make some corrections, offer new ways of interpretation and throw light on some details.

WHO IS AVITOHOL?

The dispute on this problem has a long history and one can read an extensive review of it in M. Moskov.⁷ The dispute boils down to the question whether Avitohol, whom Bulgarians connect with the roots of Bulgarian statesmanship (or more precisely “kingly” rule), is actually Atila, the famous leader of the Huns, who became known in Europe in the 30s and 40s of the 5th c. Or whether the first Bulgarian “king” was a mythical figure. It seems to me that the earliest date for Avitohol – 153 AD, suggested by M. Moskov and later by P. Dobrev, is the most plausible hypothesis known so far. Consequently P. Dobrev⁸ accepted as correct the year 165 AD. Since this dating is not central to the problem dealt with here, I shall not dwell on it extensively.

It is obvious that Bulgarians themselves related the beginning of their statesmanship to the middle of the 2nd c. AD. This is a way of “inventing” an old and honorable past, characteristic of the early Middle Ages, and a common practice in many “Barbaric”/“tribal” States.

⁷ Moskov, M., *op. cit.*

⁸ Cf. Добрев, П. Преоткриването на прабългарския календар, р. 31, 123; Царственик на българското достоление. С., 1998, pp. 110, 114, 119, 121.

According to calculations by the *List* and data about the life and death of Atila, M. Moskov⁹ admitted that the last year of Avitohol – 453 coincides with the death of Atila – also 453. Hence he claimed that “we must agree that Avitohol was Atila”. Other scholars, who have worked on the problem, share this opinion. But in their chronology the death of Atila and the last year of Avitohol did not coincide. Of course it is quite possible that these years coincide and Atila’s death marks the end of a period in the development of Bulgarian statesmanship and tradition. This, however, does not automatically imply that Atila and Avitohol was one and the same person. It is hardly probable that Bulgarians would prefer the name of a ruler, marking the end of a period in their history and State, to be connected with their forefather (?!). What is more, mythological thinking is not interested in rationalizing things the way we do, using our “sound logic”. At the end of the 20th c. it is easy for us to accept that since Atila was so powerful, he would be also the forefather. Mythological thinking has its own laws and rules, which lie far back in antiquity.

⁹ Moskov, M. *op. cit.*, p. 164, 173. A matter of interest is the age of Avitohol – 300. According to I. V. Pyankov [Зороастр в истории Средней Азии: проблемы места и времени (Опыт исторической реконструкции) - Вестник древней истории, 1996, 3, p. 17] means \$10 generations of 30 years each: this type of counting time was common for Zoroastrian tradition. Counting the generations is a very common ritual. In Central Asia it is preserved even today (by 25 year cycles)....” Was this variany also valid for the proto-Bulgarians?

In other words, we must try and reconstruct the model of thinking of early Middle Age Bulgarians as to the correlation *forefather-god-given power* (in Antiquity and the Middle Ages power is always God-given) – *statesmanship*. It did not differ fundamentally from models of other ethnic communities (or other ethnic and cultural areals) that lived in pre-Modern times. Thus the question of typological similarity is central for the correct decoding of the meaning, contained in the name “Avitohol”.

We discover behind the mythological type of thinking a specific order of values, based on a different type of mental structures, in which the imaginary is the ruling principle and reality often adapts to already known and obligatory schemas. That is why attempts at reconstruction that do not recognize the sacred nature of information, most probably encoded in the phrase “Avitohol”, i.e. attempts at non-sacred reading of the text, can be hardly acceptable.

MYTHS AND MODELS

The models or, actually the basic model, always rests on myths, living in oral tradition and folklore. Myths are, as a rule, at the roots of all genealogies! One of them is the myth of the abandoned child destined to become king, being raised by an animal in a fabulous way. Thus Romul and Rem were raised by a she-wolf, the same was true of the forefather of the Turkic people. In other cases we meet with the bear, the

roe, the bull, etc, in the same role. It is logical to admit that behind the image of the animal there is the Mother Goddess, the great grandparent of all humans, respected during the Neolith or even before that.

In the Middle Ages such images must have been a relict but their presence in the folklore of many European peoples cannot be denied.

The same legend – about the forefather of Bulgarians, who was raised by a roe – was recently suggested by P. Dobrev.¹⁰ He discovered it in a Lithuanian chronicle. In short, it says that Astiag, the ruler of the Midians, wanted to prevent Kir, a future famous ruler of Ahemenidian Persia, take the throne. He tried to destroy him (Fortune, however, had decided differently). It also tells us that the Spanish “king” Gobis was saved from death and raised by a roe (!). In a similar way “the prince of Moesia or Bulgaria was raised by a roe after he was abandoned in the woods to perish.” And Priam’s successor to the throne of Troy, Paris, was raised by a bear (!).¹¹ P. Dobrev drew attention to the fact that the discovery of the legend in the Lithuanian chronicle is no coincidence. After the fall of Bulgaria under Turkish yoke the prominent educationist Grigoriy Tzamlak settled in the Lithuanian Principality, having lived in Serbia, Moldavia, and

¹⁰ Добрев, П. *Прабългарите. Произход, език, култура (Нов прочит)*. С., 1991, p. 85 and fol

¹¹ *Полное собрание русских летописей. Т. 32, М., 1975, 40; Cf. also Добрев, П. Произход..., p. 85; Преоткриването..., p. 189м История на българската държавност. С., 1995, p. 59.*

Russia.¹² Do we owe the presence of the legend of Bulgarian genealogy in the Lithuanian chronicle to him? I am tempted to remind once again that the Russian chronograph, which keeps the *List*, belongs to the end of the 14th-beginning of 15th c., though the Lists that have survived today (Synodic – 280, Uvar and Pogodin) were dated to the end of the 15th-16th c. This chronograph discloses serious Bulgarian influence and borrowing.

If we analyze the text above, we shall see that it contains the motif of the abandoned child, its fabulous rescue (most often by an animal), and the taking of power by that same child. But we must emphasize that the Bulgarian forefather – as different from that of the Persians, the Spanish and the Trojans – is nameless (!). What is known about him is that he was raised by a roe, i.e. that he was “child/son of a roe”, “descendent of a roe” (“...prince by a roe...raised”).

I. Venedikov¹³ drew attention to the motif of the abandoned child for the first time. He, however, compared the data about Ispor (Asparuh – again a forefather in Bulgarian history!) in Bulgarian apocryphal chronicles of the 11th c. with legends about Sargon, Kir (!), Paris (!), Miletos, and Romul and Rem. I. Venedikov writes: “Usually the rescuer in such legends is a shepherd, even if the child was first discovered and protected by an animal.”¹⁴ It

is more than obvious that this legend (actually an invariant of a common ethnogenetic or genealogical myth) is built on a single model. Some might suggest that this schema has been borrowed in Bulgaria from the highly civilized Byzantines after the Conversion in the 60s of the 9th c. Their books were full of similar legends. We shall see, though, that the Bulgarian legend is most probably not a copy of Byzantine models, at least in its initial part. Rather we are dealing with typological similarities. We shall dwell on that further down.

Unfortunately I. Venedikov was not aware of the legend about the origin of the Bulgarian forefather and his reign, contained in the Lithuanian chronicle. So he did not make the connection Ispor – child of a roe, on the level of the mythical image. This connection is even stronger when we consider the translation of the word “Avitohol” itself. It is known that its etymology has been analyzed by many scholars.¹⁵ But I am inclined to think that P. Dobrev’s translation¹⁶ is the most precise in view of the systemic approach to facts. It is confirmed by narrative sources, on the lexical level. In the translation of AVITOHOL he used east Iranian languages and primarily those spoken in the region of Pamir. He derived the word

¹² Добрев, П. История..., p. 59.

¹³ Венедиков, И. Месното гумно на прабългарите. С., 1983, p. 47-62.

¹⁴ Ibidem. p. 61.

¹⁵ The last attempt at etymological analysis known to me is that of Д. Табаков, К-ави (Кави Кана) Туохол (Авитохол). – Ави-тохол, 1995, 1, p. 13-22, where “avi” is read as the title of Iranian origin K-avi – Uava, which is cognate with the Altaic “ilvi”. For etymology cf. also И. Иеваришидзе, Ецо раз об Этимологии имен Asina и Atila-Авитохоль. – Советская тюркология. 1989, 3, p. 79-81.

¹⁶ Добрев, П. Прабългарите..., p. 89, 92.

(phrase) from AVI (with the meaning “roe”, “doe”) and TOFL/TOHOL (“child”). Thus Avitohol sounded in modern Bulgarian as “child (or son) of a roe.” Indeed, in one of the contemporary languages, Vachan, spoken today near Pamir, *awu* (also *ahu*, *ohu*) has the meaning of roe, doe, while *tefl* means child, small child.¹⁷ That is why P. Dobrev is inclined to think that “in the first line of the *List* there lies a myth, a legend” about “a human being of exceptional origin, but a creature that really existed, because the initial year shown against it coincides with one of the greatest migrations from Asia to Europe. Like many spiritual leaders, Avitohol was both myth and reality”.¹⁸ The translation of Avitihol – the child of the roe, completely covers the information from the Lithuanian chronicle about the forefather of the Bulgarians, raised by a roe.

Some ten years ago An. Stoinev¹⁹ expressed the opinion that Avitohol and the next in the *List* – Imik, were “mythologized personages” “semigods-semihumans, who had the function of cultural heroes” and hence represented “in an unreal, mythological plan.” Their deeds, performed at the Beginning, were sacred, close to “the act of Creation”. For that reason they both, “without being cultural heroes, actually performed the function of a “cultural hero.” They “bring divine order, make it legitimate,

set the banner, the cultural, the civilized Beginning among proto-Bulgarians.” I would add: they set the beginning of Bulgarian rule and statesmanship (it is a different matter what kind of rule it was in the middle of the 2nd c. AD)²⁰ by means of the mythical

“DESCENDENT OF THE ROE”

Why should a roe raise the Bulgarian ruler?

This question will probably have its adequate answer if we go back to the facts, offered by some Byzantine historians, as well as those of Jordan. They have been discussed so many times²¹ that I will not dwell on them again.

The famous legend of the roe (deer), which took the Scythians (the Huns in other variants) over to Europe, was told by Evnapius in the beginning of the 5th c., i.e. many years before the reign of Atila. Then it appears in Sozomen, Prisk the Rhetorician, and in the next century, in Procopius of Caesaria, in Agathius of Mirinea, and in

²⁰ In his book “История на българската държавност”, p. 61, P. Dobrev claims that the first year of Avitohol – 153 AD, is initial for the “history of the Bulgarian State in Europe”. In my mind we still don’t have enough data from historical sources to confirm the existence of a Bulgarian State in Europe as early as the 2nd c. AD. The year 153 may indicate the birth of this statesmanship (whatever one means by that) in the personality of the first legendary “king” somewhere in Central Asia.

²¹ Cf. Златарски, В. История на българската държава през средните векове. Т. I, ч. I, С., 1970, p. 62; detailed analysis also in П. Юхас, Тюркобългари и маджари. С., 1985, p. 405.

¹⁷ Грюнберг, А., Стеблин-Каменский И. Языки восточного Гиндукуша. Ваханский язык. М., 1976, p. 405, 477.

¹⁸ Добрев, П. Преоткриването..., p. 189.

¹⁹ Стойнев, Ан. Светогледът на прабългарите. С., 1985, p. 55, 143-144.

Jordan. It has undergone several transformations without changing its basic elements:

The deity, in animal incarnation (most often a roe or a deer) leads a people to new lands of settlement. They pass through water (usually a sea), meaning Chaos, unordered space in the language of mythological thinking, but they also cross a border. The journey to a new land becomes a turning point in the development of the ethnos and in this way marks an important change in its history.²²

This legend was attributed to the Scythians (the Huns), more specifically to the Utigurs and the Kutrigurs, and some kin tribes. Reflexes from it can be found in Bulgarian, Chuvash, and Magyar folklore.²³ It is difficult to relate it to any particular ethnos because of its wide distribution on the Eurasian continent. According to P. Uhas²⁴ "Bulgarian chronists of the Middle Ages did not record this pagan legend of origin (*about the fabulous deer and roe*) or they were not aware of it." They, however, recorded the legend about the roe that gave birth and hence "royal power" to the first Bulgarian ruler. No wonder if one day we discover in some old Bulgarian source the legend of the deer that took many peoples of Central Asia over to Europe long before the so-called Great Migration. It is not at all difficult to

explain why in some variants we meet the roe and in others – the deer. As a matter of fact, both animals are incarnations of the god that helps the respective people. One example will suffice – the forefather of the Turkic people was raised by a she-wolf, but their chieftains, though loyal to genealogy, considered themselves successors of the wolf and put on their flags images of a golden wolf-head.²⁵

To support the translation of Avitohol as child of a roe (deer) we can supply additional data. V. Abaev²⁶, following J. Dumezil, suggested that the original name of the Scythians – *Saka* – comes from the Osetian (i.e. east Iranian/north Iranian) *sag* ("deer"). This comes to show that the Scythians themselves derived their origin from the deer (or a god incarnated in a deer). Herodotus (History, VII, 64) points out that the Persians called all Scythians "Saks". The Saks are also mentioned in the famous Behistun inscription of Darius I. It says that the Saks did not pay homage to Ahura Mazda but believed in the old Indo-Iranian gods and respected the natural elements. According to Polien the Saks paid homage to "eternal fire and sacred water."²⁷ Those are the tribes whom the Indians will later call Shaka (Saka), the

²² Юхас, П., *op. cit.*; Стойнев, Ан., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

²³ Юхас, П. Др. Сит.; Календеров, П., *Една сърна посочи пътя на нашите прадеди. – Нащата родина*, 1973, 3, p. 15-17.

²⁴ Юхас, П., *op. cit.*, p. 432.

²⁵ Бичурин, Н., *Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена*. Т. I, М.-Л., 1950, фддн 229; Гумилев, Л., *Древние тюрки*, М., 1967, p. 22-23.

²⁶ Аббаев, В., *Скифо-европейские изоглосы. На стыке Востока и Запада*. М., 1965, p. 105.

²⁷ Кузмина, Е., *В стране Кавата и Афраси-аба*. М., 1977, p. 84.

Greeks will call them Óáêáé, and the Romans – Sacae. They lived north of the great “cedentarian” empires of the Chinese, the Persians, and the Romans. Most of them occupied the territories of the so-called Internal Scythia, i.e. today’s Near East and Middle Asia. To their world belonged also the ancient Bulgarians. That is why the motif of the deer is so well presented in Bulgarian folklore.

THE CULT OF THE DEER

and the god incarnated in the deer is very old and takes us back to the time before the appearance of Indo-Europeans in Europe and Asia. B. Ribakov admits that with the Slavs it was related to Perun; with eastern Slavs rain on Ilinden (St. Ilia takes on the functions of Perun!) depended on the appearance of a deer; on the same day a deer was slaughtered as a ritual animal.²⁸

It is obvious that in ancient times the deer was the animal of the supreme god, connected with rain and thunder. In the Bronze age this god was the god of the Underworld and Earth, the husband of the Great Mother Goddess.²⁹ This fact explains the extremely wide distribution of the deer cult, before being displaced by the horse, a fact most often connected with the appearance of the Indo-Europeans.

As early as the beginning of our cen-

tury D. Marinov writes that in Bulgarian folklore the stag is surrounded by “a halo of sanctity and mystery.”³⁰ Very popular, in Christmas songs in particular (the time of birth of the new god), are variants of the theme “hunting the stag and its conversation with the hunter.” Such songs are sung today primarily in northeastern Bulgaria (!). Usually they tell of a gray stag, i.e. a fabulous stag. It is not destined for the hunter for there is “a bright moon” on its back and a “bright sun” on his horns. A fairy tale, recorded in the Debar region many years ago, tells the following: an Arnaut killed a stag helped by his Bulgarian neighbors. The stag called a curse on them and after some time only seven houses remained in the village but only Arnauts lived in them! (they were 77 – the symbolic character of the number 7 here is more than obvious).

A common motif in Bulgarian folk songs is the transformation of people into deer (or roes). In this respect they are close to the musical folklore of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Siberia. For that reason J. Moroz³¹ claims that we can discover a very archaic layer in the folklore of contemporary Turkic people in Central Asia, genetically related to non-Turkic tribes that inhabited these lands before. They derived their origin from the deer or the roe. This is where the Bulgarians came from.

²⁸ Рыбаков Б., *Космогония и мифология земледельцев энеолита*. – Советская археология, 1965, 2, р. 15, бел. 4; *Язычество древних славян*. М., 1981, р. 54.

²⁹ СФ. Голан А., *Миф и символ*. М., 1993.

³⁰ Маринов Д., *Народна вяра и религиозни народни обичаи*. – Сб. НУНК, XXVIII, 1914, ., 83.

³¹ Мороз Й., *ранната религиозна семантика на народните предания в етническата история на българите*. – Проблеми на културата, 1980, 6, р. 49, 51-58.

Our predecessors of the early Middle Ages left in the 8th-10th c. images of deer and roes in the region of Pliska, Preslav, Dobrudza, along the Black Sea coast, and near Syar (Syr).³² Today the deer (roe) in our folklore must not be interpreted as heritage from Bulgarians and Slavs alone. It is a syncretic image and widely distributed in the myths of many peoples. It is improbable that this image resulted from "the strong influence of the mythological tradition of the Thracians."³³ In the mind of Bulgarians the mythological image of the deer embodied the heavenly principle, the Universe. It was the mediator between Earth and Heaven. According to the legend, he who killed a deer was awaited by disaster. We know of stories about ritual killings of deer and they have parallels in many parts of Eurasia.³⁴ We still have the so-called "elenski" (elinski) (deer) churches in Bulgaria, situated primarily in mountainous regions (the mountain as the Axis mundi). They are usually built in high places, round the ruins of churches, with consecrated grounds, on which ritual killings are performed on Ilinden or Petrovden (ox or lamb). They are also related to a persistent legend of the ritual killing of a deer that was later substituted by a domestic animal, thus breaking the rules of the ritual.³⁵

³² Овчаров Д., *Български средновековни рисунки графити*. С., 1982, табл. 16, 171-33, p. 115-116. The author relates the drawings near Syar with Kuber's Bulgarians.

³³ The statement belongs to И. Георгиева, *Българска народна митология*. С., 1983, p. 45, 200.

³⁴ *Ibidem.*, p. 40-42 and references.

³⁵ Калоянов А., *Българското езичество – катица, кумири и жреци*. – In: *Studia protobulgarica et medaevalia europensia* (to honor Prof. V. Beshevliev). В. Търново, 1993, p. 283.

The image of the deer in ancient art is particularly characteristic of the territories of the Near East and Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Europe. Very popular in this region and especially in Asia is the myth of the deer/stag that carries the sun on its back. Among the Siberian peoples it is interpreted as the image of the Universe and the incarnation of the Underworld and the Earth. Obviously, the deer/stag, being a representative of the gods of the Underworld, is at the same time connected with Heaven and the Sun.³⁶ The initial myth, in which the god of the Underworld, in the form of a dragon, hunts the deer that abducted the virgin-Sun, underwent many transformations and modifications. For example, the fabulous deer that abducted the Sun for himself, turned into a hero, who gave people sun, light and fire. Later it became simply the benefactor of people on Earth, teaching them many useful things, acquainting them with many valuable and useful skills, traditionally ascribed to the god of the Underworld: agriculture, knowledge, crafts, etc. Most probably the Scythians also respected the deer as their benefactor, as the good spirit of the people.³⁷

The study of such myths made A. Golan presume that the myth of the deer is related to the "cultural hero", who appears as a leg-

³⁶ Окладников А., *Олень золотые рога*. Л.-М., 1964, p. 58; Голан А., *дз. Cit.*, p. 25, 37, 49; Cf. also Боргояков М., *Гунско-тюркский сюжет от прародителя-олень быке №*. – *Советская тюркология*, 1976, 3, p. 55-59.

³⁷ Голан А., *др. Cit.*, p. 41, 43.

endary figure with a civilization mission to humanity.³⁸ Later some of the cult and mythological notions of the deer were transferred onto the horse, also connected with the world beyond and the Sun (the horse being a secondary image). In one case it was represented as the god of the Sun and in others as the god of the Underworld.³⁹

GODS AND DYNASTIES

After the adoption of Christianity in Hungary the legend of the deer was modified into a legend of the origin of the Arpads.⁴⁰

Magyars traditionally connected Arpad with the beginning of their statesmanship in Panonia. In addition to this legend there is another one, also very important for our problem, since it also relates to the mythical origin of the Arpad dynasty. In short, it is the following: according to the so-called Hungarian Anonym, Emesu conceived of the turul bird and had dreams connected with the birth of the ruler. These images were called "dream" (*almu*) in the Magyar language. Since the birth of the ruler was foretold in a dream, he himself was named Almos (*Almus*). Similarity with the well-known ruler of Volga Bulgaria, Almush, is more than obvious. But in this case it is more important to mention that the word *emes* means *female, mother* in languages related to Hungarian! Thus the original story, told by the legend, says that the forefather of the Arpads came in this world as a result of the

relationship between the turul bird and some woman.⁴¹ This motif, translated into our language from the language of the myth, shows that the appearance of the ruler followed the relationship between Heavens (the turul bird) and Earth (the Mother Goddess, most probably). That is why G. Györffy⁴² claims that "the community of Hungarians, who created the legend, were not acquainted with their descent from Atila..." The name of the Hun ruler does not appear at all before the Anonym, mentioned above, and before Shimon Kezai's chronicle it appears only twice.⁴³ This suggests that the connection with Atila is the result of "learned culture" in Hungary and can be dated not earlier than the 12th, or more probably, the 13th c. This "invention of genealogy" was in perfect harmony with the mentality of Medieval literati and usually served the court and monastery culture.

The genealogy of the Saxons in Britain presented the heavenly essence of power in a similar way, connecting the origin of the ruler with some god. Being already converted to Christianity, they still derived their origins from Wodan (in Wessex) and from Seaxnet (in Essex), respectively.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Kristo Gy., *Hungarian History in the Ninth Century*. Szeged, 1996, p. 76.

⁴² Györffy Gy., *Our chronicles and Hungarian protohistory [in Hungarian]*. Budapest, 1948, p. 41, 127 – cit. by: Kristo Gy, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁴³ Kristo Gy., *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁴⁴ Archibald M., Brown M., Webster L., *Heirs of Rome: the shaping of Britain AD 400-900*. – In: Webster L., Brown M. (Eds.), *The transformation of the Roman World AD 400-900*. University of California Press. Berkley and Los Angeles, 1977, p. 218 and references.

³⁸ *Ibidem.*, p. 41, 136.

³⁹ *Ibidem.*, p. 48-50.

⁴⁰ Юхас П., *op. cit.*, p. 431.

The Franks also possessed the myth of the supernatural origin of the dynasty. Thus, according to a Frankish pagan legend, Prince Merovei was born from the relationship between his mother-queen and a sea monster. The legend, written down by the Christian chronist Pseudo-Fredegarius, is related without any commentaries by the author. Despite its clearly pagan character, in the 7th c. it was still popular in the royal court. In this way the legend played the role of an important component of the official dynastic tradition of the Merovingians.⁴⁵

Therefore it is natural to expect that things went the same way in Bulgaria too. Exactly when was the story written down in manuscripts is difficult to say. But it seems that the time of Simeon, especially after his conflict with Byzantium and his ambition to raise "the Bulgarian name" in the beginning of the 10th c., is the most probable period. It seems plausible that the legend of the first Bulgarian ruler, raised by a roe, is synthetically expressed in the initial words of the *List* ("Avitohol lived for 300 years") and more precisely in the composite word (phrase) Avitohol. And this was done long before the adoption of Christianity. After 864, and most probably

⁴⁵ Ронин В., Франки, вестготы, лангобарды в VI-VIII вв.: политические аспекты самосознания. — Одиссей. Человек в истории. М., 1989, p. 68. For more see Hauck K., *Lebensnormen und Kultmythen in germanischen Stämmen — und Herrschergenealogie.* — *Saeculum*. Vol. 6, 1955, S. 195-214, and Moisl H., *Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies and Germanic Oral Tradition.* — *Journal of Medieval History*, Vol. 7, 1981, p. 224-226.

terminus post quem 893, it was the *List* that became part of the probable Bulgarian chronograph.⁴⁶ Its inclusion immediately after Book Four Kings in "Hellenic and Roman Chronicle" is symptomatic since in this way it served Bulgarian doctrine of power and State, and demonstrated the ambitions of the Bulgarians for the crown, including them in world history.

Can we draw some connection between the Lithuanian chronicle and the Chronicle mentioned above? Most probably we can, since both contain the genealogical legend of the origin of the first Bulgarian "king-founder", though written down in different ways. But to formulate a well founded theses we need detailed analysis of the text of the two sources.

Summary:

1. The name of the first Bulgarian ruler is not known. It is known that he was called Avitohol, which name can be translated as "the prince raised by a roe."

2. The first ruler of Bulgarians appears on the historical scene in the middle of the 2nd c. and sets the beginning of a 300-year long period that ended with the death of Atila (or immediately after it).

3. The genealogical legend of Bulgarians is most probably built after the model

⁴⁶ The hypothesis belongs to L. Gorina who admits that the Bulgarian chronograph was compiled after the 20s of the 10th c. Cf. Горина Л., Имменик болгарских ханов в составе Эллинского летописца первой редакции. — *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 1991, 3, p. 93-97.

of mythological thinking, according to which the first ruler was raised by a sacred animal (she-wolf, she-bear, roe, etc.), which is an incarnation of a goddess. This also explains power given from above, from Heaven. This myth is often accompanied by the motif of the "abandoned child", which is also part of the Bulgarian legend.

4. The legend of the miraculous deer/roe that raised the first ruler of Bulgarians is present both in written sources (Bulgarian, Byzantine and Gothic – in a modified form, and Lithuanian) and in oral folklore (songs, legends). It seems logical then to ask the question: is Avitohol a historical personality or a mythical figure? And open once again the old problem: is Avitohol and Atila the same person.*

This is a philological analysis of the text *List of Bulgarian Khans*.¹

The aim is to discover its many-layered structure. The obvious traces of interference with the text synchronically reflect the manifold processes of cultural integration and episodic differentiation of proto-Bulgarians and Slavs in Medieval Bulgarian society.

The analysis includes the following problems:

1. The *List* is interpreted as a text, and not as a manuscript. The manuscript is an episode in the history of a text and its isolated analysis could broaden our knowledge in a different perspective.

2. To discover the structure of the text. To identify the elements of this structure and define the links, which unite them in a coherent whole.

3. To distinguish the languages, which make up the text and identify their specific syntactic and semantic function.

As is well known, language is a concrete cultural phenomenon. It is always highly sensitive to the foreign element and demonstrates varying ability to incorporate it and put it to use. In this sense all texts, available to our contemporaries, are multilinguistic.

Analyzing the co-existence of languages in a text we can isolate three types of correlation between them. In the first type linguistic diversity is due to the presence of foreign elements. Their integration in the

* This text was written for the collection of papers called "History and Historiography", dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Prof. M. Veleva, 1996 (forthcoming).

¹ By the edition of M. Москов "Именник на българските ханове (ново тълкуване)", С., 1988, pp.19-21.

THE LIST OF BULGARIAN KHANS LINGUISTIC IDENTIFICATION OF THE TEXT

Dr. ANTOANETA DELEVA

text is marked by speakers in various ways, like, for example, by the use of the adverb βουλαριστι to mark non-Greek realia in Byzantine sources. An example of a second common pattern of marking foreign elements by means of words is given by Joan Kinam², who introduced the following marker for the Hunno-Bulgarian title μβανος (*ban) μπάνον ταύτην καλοῦσιν Οὔννοι τὴν ἀρχὴν [Io. Kinn. 117:4]. In this case the text unambiguously specifies the receiver-language and the target language.

In the second type of language correlation similar distinctions are disregarded completely. In such cases we have bilingual texts. Let us remind the earliest bilin-

gual texts of Lazar from Pliska³ and Ana's cross from Preslav.⁴ In the bilingual type of text both languages are equal but clearly delimited. The only connecting link between them is the same content, i.e. they are mutually translatable.

In the third model of language interference one of the languages is basic, while the other lends mostly lexical and, to a lesser extent, derivational elements, which are gradually adapted. Such is the status

² Ioannis Cinami epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarumq rec. A. Meineke, Bonnæ, 1836.

³ Tombstone inscription from the end of the 9th – beginning of 10th c.; Georgiev P., Eine zweisprachige Grabinschrift aus Pliska. *Palaeobulgarica*, 1978, 3, pp. 32-44.

⁴ Tombstone inscription from the 10th c. Tomev T., Два нови старобългарски надписи от Преслав. *Български език*, 1966, 1, pp. 39-45.

⁵ I'm using the term Hunno-Bulgarian on purpose since Hun and Bulgarian – two representatives of this archaic group of the Altaic language family, do not demonstrate important differences. The two languages have been related through the term Hunno-Bulgarian long ago. Cf. *The Hunno-Bulgarian languages in the studies of O. Pritsak*, where he analyzes in detail the closeness of the two languages of the Volga Bulgarians and of the Huns: Pritsak O., *The Hun Language of the Atila Clan*. *Harvard Ukrainian studies*. Vol. VI, No 4, Cambridge, 1982, pp. 428-476.

of Hunno-Bulgarian⁵ borrowings in classical Old Bulgarian Glagolical and Cyrillic monuments. Here is an example from the Old Bulgarian Glagolic Zograph Gospel of the end of 10th c. -beginning of 11th c.⁶:

и бѣ самъ на крѣмѣ на дохѣторѣ
сѣпа. Mk. 4:38.

As a correspondence to the Old Bulgarian borrowing дохѣторѣ “pillow”, the scribe of another early Old Bulgarian Glagolic Mariynsk Gospel suggests a substitute like на възглавѣници. The texts of John the Exarch offer many examples of the use of a derivational proto-Bulgarian borrowed suffix to produce *nomina agentis* from Slavic roots: зѣдѣчѣни, иконожѣгѣчѣни, корабѣчѣни и корабѣпловѣчѣни, крѣмѣчѣни, сревроклѣпѣчѣни.

The text of the *List* cannot be attributed to any of the three types of language interference. In the same time it contains elements of two linguistic systems: Old Bulgarian and Hunno-Bulgarian. The use of the one or the other is motivated by well-defined and well-distinguished tasks: the first are realized through the Old Bulgarian language and the second— through the Hun-Bulgarian. Their presence in the text is in good harmony so that we cannot formally distinguish a receiver-language. There are no data for this text being bilingual — Slavic and Hunno-Bulgarian words are not

mutually translatable. Even more, the structure of the text contains not only lexical but also syntactic and semantic differences, which do not allow us to define one of the languages as basic and the elements of the other as borrowings.

Linguistic analysis of the lexical component of the *List* identifies two distinct groups of lexemes: one Hunno-Bulgarian and the other — Old Bulgarian. The first supplies the text with personal names⁷, kinship terms⁸, nouns⁹, and ordinal numbers.¹⁰ The second group of lexemes contains verbal forms¹¹ and the active present participle сѣ of the auxiliary verb быти, есми, еси, nouns,¹² in the function of Object to the verbs, other nouns in noun

⁷ АВИТОХОЛЪ, ИРНИКЪ, ГОСТОУНЪ, КОУРТЪ, БЕЗМІРЪ, ЕСПЕРИХЪ, ТЕРВЕЛЪ, СЕВАРЪ, КОРМИСОШЪ, ВИНЕХЪ, ТЕЛЕЦЪ, ОУМОРЪ.

⁸ ДОУЛО, ЕРМИ, ВОКИЛЪ - ОУКИЛЪ, ОУГАИНЪ.

⁹ Names of animals — years from the cyclic calendar: ДИЛОМЪ (bis), ДОХСЪ, ШЕГОРЪ (bis), ВЕРЕНИ, ТЕКОУ, ДВАНЪ, ТОХЪ, ИМА (bis), САМОРЪ.

¹⁰ Ordinal numbers: ТВИРЕМЪ (3) - ТВИРИМЪ, ВЕЧЕМЪ (bis), АЛЕМЪ (bis), ЧИТЕМЪ, ШЕХТЕМЪ, АЛТОМЪ - АЛТЕМЪ, ТОУТОМЪ.

¹¹ Two uses of first siogmatic Aorist, 3p.sg. ЖИТЪ (bis) from жити, живѣ, живѣши of the I conjugation and ДРЪЖА from дрѣжати, дрѣжѣ, дрѣжиши, of the IV conjugation.

¹² ЛѢТО in the Acc. sg. After the numeral ОДИНО and ЛѢТЪ (from ЛѢТО n., by the declension with the meaning of “year; annus, ѣто”) with normative use of Gen. pl. with numerals and expressions of time, as well as with ДНИИ again in Gen. pl. For the use of the Genitive with expressions of time see Минчева А., Родителен падеж. In: Граматика на старобългарския език. Фонетика, морфология, синтаксис. С., 1991, p. 458.

⁷ Cf. Jagić V., *Quattuor evangeliorum codex glagoliticus olim Zographensis nunc Petropolitanus*. Berolini, 1879.

phrases with ellipsis of the auxiliary verb¹³, as well as nouns like **НАМѢСТНИКЪ** and **КНАЗЪ**, the anaphoric pronoun **И** and the 3 p. pronoun **СЪ** in the Dat. sg. **ЕМОУ**, **СЕМОУ** used to synchronize the new information, the numeral **ОДИНО**, the conjunction **И** with numbers, the conjunctions **И** and **А** for correlation and juxtaposition of theme-rheme relations, and numerical notations.¹⁴

The two lexical groups are internally homogeneous in their linguistic characteristics. The correspondence between the members of the groups is achieved through strict distribution of the functions, performed by lexemes, representatives of each of the groups. The Hunno-Bulgarian words take on a considerable part of the information load (names of khans, kin names and calendar notions). The group of Old Bulgarian words also covers part of the basic information - numerical notations of the terms of reign and secondary grammaticalization achieve the syntactic cohesion of lexemes in the text. Thus it is possible to render the information within the boundaries of the text and read it adequately.

So far the analysis discloses a scheme of piling up secondary and auxiliary functions, linguistic context over linguistic context, to render the basic information. Here is the first paragraph in the *List*:

¹³ **РОДЪ** in the Nom. sg. After the u-/o-declension and **ЛѢТЪ** in Gen. pl.

¹⁴ **Т**; **Р**. and **И**; **В**; **З** (bis); **Г** (bis); **Ф** and **ЄЛ**; **З**, **Иодино**; **К** and **А**.; **К** and **И**; **ЄІ**; **ЗІ**; **М**.

**АВИТОХОЛЪ ЖИТЪ ЛѢТЪ Т.
РОДЪ ЕМОУ ДОУЛО А ЛѢТЪ
ЕМОУ ДИЛОМЪ ТВИРЕМЪ**

Without the auxiliary supplements, the formula that we shall discover in each paragraph is:

**АВИТОХОЛЪ - ДОУЛО - ДИ-
ЛОМЪ ТВИРЕМЪ** (cf. Appendix on p. 73)

In this way the text can be presented as a 13-level variation of the three rubrics: names, kinship terms, and calendar notions. And Old Bulgarian acquires functional equivalence with the Greek of the proto-Bulgarian inscriptions. Here is one of Omurtag's inscriptions, No 61 by the classification of Prof. Vesselin Beshevliev¹⁵:

κανα συβιγι ομυρταγ.
ὁ χσουνος ὁ ζουπαν тар-
канος θρεптὸς ἄνθρωπος
μου ἴτον κὲ ἀπὲθανεν ἰς τὸ
φосάτον. ἴτον δὲ τὸ γένος
αὐτοῦ κυριγηρ.

If we go on with the philological analysis of the text structure of the *List* we shall discover still another niche, occupied by Old Bulgarian. After the first five paragraphs in the dynasty list, rhythmically arranged in the information rubrics, there follows a linguistically compact interpolation in Old Bulgarian that differs in syntactic rhythm:

¹⁵ Бешевлиев В., Първобългарски надписи. С., 1979, pp. 216-217.

СИИ Є. КЪНАЗЪ ДРЪЖАШЕ
КНАЖЕНІЄ ОБ ОНОУ СТРАНУ
ДОУНА ЛѢТЬ Ф. и ЄІ.
ОСТРИЖЕНАМИ ГЛАВАМИ

This is a concise generalization with several semantic functions: it defines the time of the proto-Bulgarian State on the other side of the Danube. At the same time it marks and correlates this State with the following use of **КЪНАЗЪ** and **КНАЖЕНІЄ**, which are present in following information about Khan Asparuh and Khan Kormisosh. The choice of this regal title is indicative of the time of interpolation, in which it was natural for the linguistic competence of the interpolator to interpret and categorize the supreme ruler of the State (and not simply the tribal chief) by means of **КЪНАЗЪ**. And in the third place, there is an additional differentiation (in addition to the locative) by mentioning the feature "hair-style". This speaks of a time distance and a historical evolution of cultural stereotypes, which is again a mark of the time of interpolation (at least some time is needed to drop such a habit, connected with the ruler's iconicity). And finally, this interpolation, so delicately and intricately interwoven into the milieu of the text, demonstrates good historical knowledge and awareness of the basic turns in the evolution of proto-Bulgarian statesmanship. Confirmation of this is the second paragraph, immediately following the first, with the same linguistic characteristics. It introduces the second part of the text:

и по томъ приде на страну доуна-

и исперихъ князь тожде и доселѣ

Syntactically related to the first interpolation by means of the coordinate conjunction **и**, this second paragraph follows the style of the first – makes the text coherent and introduces intertextual links (through grammar, lexis and the semantics of the phrase). We can judge about that by the use of the temporal phrase **тожде** and **доселѣ**, which marks locative and temporal changes in the whole text.

In the next part we again observe the precise order of the rubrics, presenting each of the rulers: the dominant information core is of proto-Bulgarian lexical elements and the functional auxiliary linguistic level is Old Bulgarian. But there are two differences: first, there is no verb after the name of the ruler, and second, there is no inversion of the year and the numeral, as is the case in three examples in the first part of the *List*. These two features characterize the whole rhythm in the second part, which shows difference in the time of creation of the two parts in their original form (before their compilation).

Here too, in the second part of the *List*, there are two interpolations of different linguistic nature, built entirely after the Old Bulgarian norm and lacking the rubric arrangement of Old Bulgarian vocabulary. These two interpolations differ in meaning from those describes above. There is no generalization, no introduction to some new information. We mean explanations related to the appearance of a new ruling dynasty.

After the information about Khan Kormisosh

СИИ ЖЕ КЪНАЗЪ ИЗМѢНИ РОДЪ
ДОУЛОВЪ РЕКШЕ ВИХТОУНЪ¹⁶

and after the information about Khan Teletz:

И СИИ ИНОГО РАДЪ¹⁷

We notice a similar explanation with Khan Gostun:

НАМѢСТНИКЪ СЪ

Therefore, the results of the philological analysis of the text, as language and structure, broaden our knowledge about the evolution of the *List*. Consecutive or simultaneous creation of two texts of the type of the proto-Bulgarian inscriptions in Greek – with central, linguistically proto-Bulgarian information core and auxiliary linguistic basis in the other language, Greek. The next stage is a precise and detailed editing of the Old Bulgarian texts, aided by a clear linguistic, historical, and cultural conceptual model. The character of the interpolations, as we saw, does not clarify whether this was done on the basis of Greek. This final version of the text intro-

duces markers of text coherence – graphical and grammatical (covering completely the proto-Bulgarian linguistic material). The Old Bulgarian linguistic material, which allows easy presentation and reading of the information about each of the Khans, confirms the scribe's awareness of the importance of the rubric rhythm in each piece of information, and in each rubric throughout the text.

We have in front of us a whole set of characteristics of an editing procedure. What demonstrates the editor's conception of the layout of the text is the interpolation. Interpolations have different information styles – they interpret, explain, generalize, but do not introduce new data. The fact that we notice a selective intrusion into the text demonstrates the respect with which the text was edited, awareness of the importance of the calendar information that could have been distorted by too many linguistic corrections. And finally, this well thought over and precise editing procedure means that the editor and author of the whole text was fully aware of the sacred character of the formulae so that he is careful not to destroy them by interpolations. He even keeps the conjunction “and” in numerical notations, which is not known and respectively not used in Old Bulgarian calendar notations (.К. И А. ЛѢТЬ). The same is true of the coordination between the notation of the year and the figure, depending on its value. The systematic creation of intertextual links, without breaking the rhythm of the formulae, speaks of the high philological culture of the editor.

¹⁶ The clarification of the functional value of this paragraph – interpolation, motivates the interpretation of the name ВИХТОУНЪ, introduces after РЕКШЕ as an explanation about the change of dynasty. In this respect we may look for some connection between the name ВИХТОУНЪ and the Turkic root *BUQ – “lurk, hide”, close to the Evenk buq-, buqtun- “throw o.s. at”. Cf. Севортян Э., Этимологический словарь тюркских языков. Общeturкские основы на буццу “Б”. М., 1978, p. 248.

¹⁷ The fixation of this Old Bulgarian postfix in final position with -ъ instead of -и (РАДИ) can be connected with a possible transliteration of the text from the Glagolic into the Cyrillic writing, also supported by other data.

He is perfectly at home with the internal logic of the text and the historical texture of the *List*. We have in front of us a conscious linguistic act, motivated by tradition in proto-Bulgarian statesmanship. The complex of linguistic features just described demonstrates a dynamic balance between the elements of the two systems.

Linguistic tolerance, cultivated in numerous contacts of proto-Bulgarians with other languages and their adaptiveness

to foreign linguistic systems, so obvious in the inscriptions in Greek, stimulate the quick development of literary and linguistic culture after the Conversion. The act of editing the *List* shows a well-developed literary and linguistic feeling for Old Bulgarian, which makes this act possible. But there is in addition a desire to render new linguistic form to the pre-Old Bulgarian conceptual system, preserving its content.

A	B	C+D	E	F
1. АВИТОХОЛЪ	ЖИТЪ	ЛЪТЪ Т.	РОДЪ ЕМОУ ДОУЛО	А ЛЪТЪ ЕМОУ ДИЛОМЪ ТВИРЕМЪ.
2. ИРНИКЪ	+	+ Р. И И.	+	+
3. ГОСТОУНЪ	НАМЪСТНИКЪ СЫ	В. ЛЪТЪ	+	+
4. КОУРТЪ	Ъ	+ ДРЪЖА	+	+
5. БЕЗЪМЪРЪ	Г.	+	+	+
6. СИН Е КЪМЪЗЪ	ДРЪЖАШЕ	+ Ф. И ЕІ.	ОСТРИЖЕНАМИ ГЛАВАМИ	+
7. И ПО ТОМЪ	КМЪЖЕНІЕ ОБ ОНОУ СТРАНУ ДОУНАГА			
8. ЕСПЕРИХЪ	КМЪЗЪ	ПРИДЕ НА СТРАНУ ДОУНАГА ИСПЕРИХЪ КМЪЗЪ	РОДЪ ЕМОУ ДОУЛО	А ЛЪТЪ ЕМОУ ВЕРЕНИ АЛЕМЪ.
9. ТЕРВЕЛЬ	-	К. И И. ЛЪТЪ	+	+
10. -	-	К. И И. +	+	+
11. СЕВАРЪ	-	ЕІ.	+	+
12. КОРМИСОШЪ	-	ЪІ.	+	+
13. СИН ЖЕ КЪМЪЗЪ		ИЗМЪНИ	РОДЪ ДОУЛОВЪ РЕКШЕ ВЕХТОУНЪ.	+
14. ВИНЕХЪ	-	Ъ.	+	+
15. ТЕЛЕЦЪ	-	Г.	+	+
16. И СИН	ИНОГО РОДЪ			
17. ОУМОРЪ	-	М. ДНИИ.	+	+

KHAN KUBRAT – FOUNDER OF MAGNA BULGARIA, AND THE SECRET HISTORY OF UKRAINE

GEORGI KOSTOV

Many centuries before the foundation of ἡ παλαια μεγάλη βουλ γαρια¹, as it appears in Greek sources, or MAGNA BULGARIA², according to Western sources, proto-Bulgarians lived a settled life or roamed about a large territory in Eurasia—from the mountain Imeon (Pamir) to Panonia (today's Hungary). Numerous written sources testify that proto-Bulgarian tribes were part of the tribal union of the Huns.³ They crossed the Caucasus not only for spoils, but also to settle in new lands⁴, they fought as mercenaries of Byzantium against its enemies (for example, against the Ostgoti⁵). They also fought against Byzantium⁶ and participated, as an organized ethnos, in the Turkic and the Avar haganate.

In 567-568 Khan Saldzibu (Istemi) conquered the proto-Bulgarians. In the Turkic haganate, divided into eight parts, the Bulgarian Utrigurs were ruled by Anagai. Under his leadership proto-Bul-

garians took part in the conquering of Bospor and the lands round the Azov and the Caspian Sea. In 581 the Turkic haganate dissolved into Eastern and Western. The basic proto-Bulgarian population remained in the Western part.

In short: anthropologically, geographically and culturally the proto-Bulgarian ethnos was formed predominantly on the territories of today's Ukraine and South Russia.

WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE WERE THE PROTO-BULGARIANS

This has been a problem for many scholars for more than a century. Some, especially western chronicists, identify them as Huns and the term "Hunno-Bulgarians" has established itself permanently in historiography. Others call them Turkic, still others—Indo-Iranians, or Caucasians. There are scholars who classify them with the Slavs.



*The warrior-victor portrayed
on a gold jai
from the Ancient Bulgarian treasure,
found near the town
of Nagy St. Miklosh,
Transilvania, present Romania.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien.*



This variety of opinions has led to a ridiculous theory, which is still in circulation: proto-Bulgarians were a mixture of tribes and peoples and “Bulgar” meant “rabble”?!

The proto-Bulgarians are of Turkic origin. This is the opinion of most European scholars, whose names I shall not mention since this would take me pages. But at the same time the Turkic origin is disputed by outstanding scholars like Prof. B. von Arnim, Acad. N. Mor, Prof. J. Denny, Prof. S. Menges. Acad. D. Angelov takes a special stand: the proto-Bulgarians were a Turkicized people. But he does not specify their initial origin...

There is a long-standing dispute about the origins of proto-Bulgarians in Bulgaria but we shall not dwell on it here. My opinion is that as early as the 5th c. the process of Turkization of proto-Bulgarian tribes began and in 7th-8th c., within the Chazar haganate, this process was stabilized. But on the territory of today's southwestern Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania and Bulgaria, in particular, Turkization has been substituted by mass Slavization. The oldest learned Slavic people – the Bulgarians, were actually Slavic, with a considerable proto-Bulgarian component.

AND YET – WHERE ARE THE ROOTS OF PROTO-BULGARIANS

They are mentioned in the Anonymous Chronograph of 334, among the 25 oldest peoples in the world. The expression *Ziezi ex quo Vulgares* follows the names of peoples that have disappeared –

Elamites, Assyrians, the Haldeic people, and comes immediately after the Armenians and the Gymnosophists (Hindus).

Analyzing the Dagestan chronicle "Derbent-name", the Armenian Geography "Ashharatzuitz" (7th c.), and comparing the data contained in them with the widely known data of Michael of Syria and other Byzantine chronists, the contemporary Bulgarian scholar Peter Dobrev stands in his books⁶ firmly on the position that proto-Bulgarians were not of Turkic origin. He claims that they were an east Iranian people, who migrated, after a 60-day march, from Pamir to the lower reaches of the Don in 5th-6th c.

My opinion is that originally proto-Bulgarians were Indo-Iranian people, strongly Turkicized and Slavicized, and also partially Mongolized. My claim is based on the hundreds of proto-Bulgarian skulls studied by me: from the river Severski Donetz and the Caucasus, to the river Danube and Thrace.

Complex analyses of large parts of the population of present-day Bulgaria – anthropometry, blood groups, etc., indicate that only 11% of contemporary Bulgarians bear the eastern characteristics of proto-Bulgarians. This is not a high percentage, but it is not little either, having in mind the crossroad location of Bulgaria on the Balkans.

Why then historiography is so persistent in its claim that proto-Bulgarians were Mongoloid? There is one peculiarity that eludes historians, but archeologists and anthropologists know it very well: proto-Bulgarian ar-

istocracy deformed its skull on purpose. This was done with one or two bandages, tied round the skull in very early age. The ritual was, of course, of a magical nature and was common among many peoples in the world. The aim was to distinguish the individual from the masses, not aesthetically but rather by caste, class, and other characteristics that we can only guess. In encounters with the Europeans this form of the skull simply shocked them and this is how the theory of their Mongolian origin was born.

One can write many curious things about the deformed skulls of proto-Bulgarians. But for a person, who wants to look at the problem from a scientific point of view, I would recommend the works of the Bulgarian archeologist D. Dimitrov, who excavated a round mass grave by the town of Devnya, in northeastern Bulgaria. There he found tens of proto-Bulgarian skulls with marks of artificial deformation. In fact they are the heads of members of proto-Bulgarian families, who, in the 9th c., refused to adopt Christianity, imposed by Prince Boris-Michael in Bulgaria.

Allow me an aphoristic question: Who is able to say what is the anthropological characteristic of the contemporary American in USA or even more ridiculous – what is the anthropological characteristic of the so-called "contemporary man"?

The proto-Bulgarians have met, in their thousands years of history, with many more tribes, peoples and races than the contemporary American has. And exactly with the same number as the so-called "Soviet man" has met in the vast territories of Eurasia.

TRY TO PRONOUNCE THE WORD BULGARIANS – YOU WILL TWIST YOUR TONGUE

The Slavs call us “Bolgari”, the Greeks call us “vulgaros”, in the West we are called “Bulgar” or “bugr”, and in the East our name is “bulgari”. We have called ourselves “Bulgari” (blugari) for thousands of years. And our State we call Bulgaria, for more than 1300 years, and not Bolgaria or Boulgaria.

The difficult to pronounce combination bul-/blu- is today linguistically productive only in three places in the world: in Bulgaria, in several small regions of northern Caucasus, and in one poorly known area of the Pamir. This is a solid argument against the theory of Turkic origin. No Turkic language knows such a sound combination and no person of Turkic origin can pronounce it with ease!

But what does “Bulgari” mean? What is the etymology of the word?

Scholars have analyzed roots like áóë/ü, áîëã/ê-, vulg-, and so on for centuries. This is not the place to list the so many theories on this problem. Some think that the name “bulgari” comes from “bulga” – sable. Others think that it comes from “bolg” = áîã (“god”), i.e. “people chosen of God”, still others... But that is enough!

Serious scholars do not register the fact that we have never been “bolgari” or “bulgari”. This is how the others call us. We call ourselves “Bulgarians” from times immemorial. This bul-/blu- is linguistically productive in Assyrian and Elamic monu-

ments. This is not improbable if we judge by the calendar of proto-Bulagrians. Its astronomical orientation point dates back to about 3000 BC.

To conclude this topic, which can be the subject of a different paper, let me make a joke. We all originate from Adam and Eve and such a dispute – which nation is older, if not carried for scientific purposes, smells of sophistry and politics.

THE FOUNDATION OF GREAT BULGARIA

in 632 on the territory of today’s Ukraine and south Russia must be taken not only as a political act, but also as a normal historical process. The proto-Bulgarian tribes unite round the leader of the Unogondurs Kubrat (Kurt) of the family Dulo and get rid of the rule of the Turkic tribes. This is one of the focal points in their history. According to the Byzantine chronists Theophanus the Confessor and Patriarch Nikiforous, and following the Armenian Geography of Shirakatzi, proto-Bulgarians turned the Azov Sea into their internal sea.

In the List of Bulgarian Khans Kubrat comes after Avitohol (Atila), his son Irnik and Bezmer. It says literally:

ΚΟΥΡΤΉ: Ζ ΛΉΤΉ ΔΡΉΖΑ. ΡΟΔ ΕΜΟΥ
ΔΟΥΛΟ Α ΛΉΤΉ ΕΜΟΥ ΨΕΓΟΡΉ ΒΕΧΕΜΉ:

This message is interpreted differently by different scholars, but according to Prof. P. Mutafovchev, Acad. V. Beshevliev and Acad. O. Pritsak, Kubrat held power for 60 years, from 605 to 665. Sixty years on the throne

is a whole epoch, especially in early Middle Ages. Even though Kubrat becomes an independent ruler only in 632, this wise man deserves our special attention.

WAS KUBRAT A CHRISTIAN?

The founder of Great Bulgaria and father of Khan Asparuh, who founded Danubian Bulgaria, was a Christian. We have two written sources about his conversion in 619, at Constantinople. The first is from Bishop John of Nikiu (Lower Egypt). It was written in Greek, translated into Arabic, but has reached us in Egyptian. Prof. V. Zlatarski published it in Bulgarian in 1894, translating it from French.

Here is a part of the same Egyptian text, but this time translated from English: "...and when the inhabitants of Byzantium heard this news they said: "This intention is connected with Kubrat, the leader of the Huns, nephew of Organa, who was converted in the city of Constantinople and accepted into the Christian community in [his] childhood, and he was raised in the Emperor's palace. Between him and the older Iraklius there was great sympathy and peace, and after the death of Iraklius he showed his sympathy to his sons and his wife, Martina, because of the attention paid to him [by Iraklius]. And after his conversion he overpowered all Barbarians and Pagans with the blessing of his conversion..."

The second text, showing that Kubrat was a Christian, is found in Nikifore's *Breviaria*. This text we shall cite by Acad. V. Beshevliev's translation from Greek:

"...at the same time the leader of the Unogondurs, Kubrat, nephew of Organ, rose against the Avar haganate. He treated badly the army left by him and drew it out of his land. He sent emissaries to Iraklius and concluded peace with him, which lasted till the end of his life, because he [Iraklius] sent him presents and honored him as a patrician... Some time passed and the ruler of the Huns, together with his nobles and lancers, came to Byzantium and asked of the Emperor to be converted to Christianity. He met him gladly and the Roman nobles adopted, through holy conversion, the Hun nobles. To the people thus converted to the sacred mystery he gave royal presents and honor. He honored this ruler with the title of patrician and sent him off, with friendly feelings, to the Hun towns."

Kubrat received the title of patrician in 635, after the "Huns", in fact the proto-Bulgarians, participated in series of wars on the side of Byzantium.

In addition to the written sources, we also have archaeological evidence. We find it on items from Kubrat's treasure, discovered by the village Malya Pereshchepina by Poltava, in Ukraine. They are now kept in Saint Petersburg, at the Hermitage. I am pleased to be one of those who assisted in presenting this treasure to the public in the exposition of the National Museum of History in Sofia, several years ago.

With the polite permission of Acad. Piotrovski, Director of the Hermitage, I was able to see the whole treasure of Kubrat, which is the richest – I must emphasize that – in early Middle Ages in Europe.

The objects are extremely valuable and we shall describe them later in this paper. But I was struck by the number of images on them, related to the Christian cross and its variants. One could find them on dishes, on the gold sheath of the sword, in the so called "partition enamel" of the ornaments. This is easy to explain: most of the objects are Byzantine by origin or style, distinguished presents or military spoils. But when on the reverse side of the ceremonial gold belt of Khan Kubrat I saw the inscribed crosses, which had apotropeic, i.e. protective meaning, this was enough for the archeologist. Kubrat must have been Christian at heart, but in some peculiar, "pagan" manner.

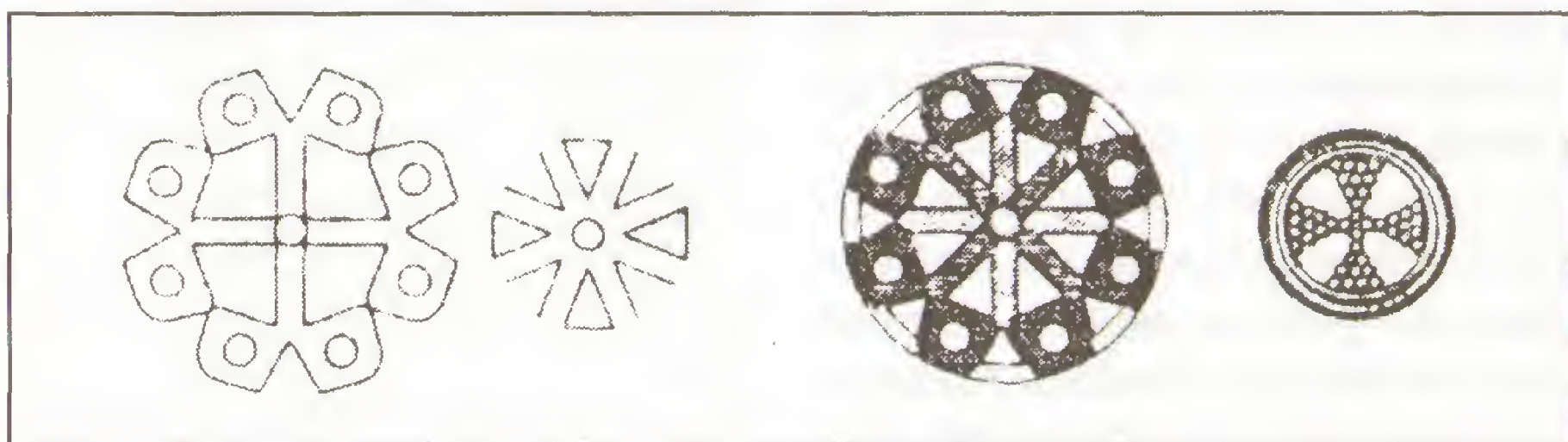
Why then proto-Bulgarians, as a people, were not converted? Why were they drawn between Tangra, Jehovah, Christ and Mohamed? This is not the topic of this paper. But a whole thesis can be written on this, I assure you.

The cross-like monograms on the clay seals of Kubrat deserve special attention. They are two. The inscriptions on them are in Greek letters and they read: "Hobratu"

and "Hobratu patriciu", according to the reading of Dr. V. Zeibt and Prof. J. Verner, the scholar who proved the location of the burial place of Kubrat.



Buckle of solid gold from the treasure of Malaya Pereshchepina



Crosses on objects from the burial collection, found at Malaya Pereshchepina: on the gold buckle and on a belt end-cap (by J. Verner)



*Khan Kubrat's monograms on clay seals from
the treasure of Malya Pereshchepina near
Poltava, Ukraine*

*The monogram of
Organa, Kubrat's uncle*

In the Hermitage, I was happy to put on my finger one ring, unknown to scholars. I was allowed to do that by Ms. V. Zaleskaya. She later published its description. This ring belonged to Organ, the uncle of Khan Kubrat. The monogram on it is also cross-like and it reads: "Bat Orhanu patriciu." Then Organa was Christian too!

Later these interpretations were confirmed by D. Vitanov in Bulgaria, who did computer analysis and published the results in "Journal of BAS", 4, 1989.

And finally, something sensational about the personality of Kubrat: in the ornaments of some objects from his treasure there are stylized images of the so-called Ukrainian trident. There it has the form of a semi-palmette. We find a similar image on the plate of the sheath of his son, Asparuh, from the treasure, discovered by the Voznesenska village, the Zaporozie region, Ukraine. I myself have published on this problem in Ukraine. Here I will conclude that the family Dulo was a kind of bridge,

by which this regal image, a symbol of power, was handed from time immemorial to the present day in Ukraine!

KUBRAT'S GREAT BULGARIA

in the light of archaeological discoveries is a large topic, on which many volumes can be written.

The presence of proto-Bulgarians on the territory of Ukraine and South Russia has been archaeologically proved by the end of the 19th c. To this very day scholars do not stop finding cultures and objects, directly or indirectly related to them. The findings were interpreted by such outstanding scholars as Gorodtzov, Yavornitzkiy, Grinchenko, Artamonov, Pletneva... Even today many scholars excavate settlements and necropolises, connected with proto-Bulgarians. I will mention the names of Prof. Miheev, Baradulin, Shvetzov, Krasilnikov, Shapolov... The expedition included scholars from Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

These useful contacts are dead now. Let us hope that the crisis we are all going through will be overcome soon and joint scholarly efforts will be renewed...

Before the description of cultures and objects, related to the presence of proto-Bulgarians in Ukraine, let me share my dissatisfaction with the way proto-Bulgarian findings are kept at the museums there – especially in regional and city museums. You read the inscription “Nomads” and that is all. But behind this word there are hidden whole tribes and peoples. It is impermissible to define historical findings in this way in the end of the 20th c. I know of the objective difficulties in distinguishing proto-Bulgarian findings from Chazar or Alan ones, but every student can tell the difference between Slavic and proto-Bulgarian.

I remember going to the museum in the town of Lisichansk, Ukraine, where there are heaps of proto-Bulgarian historical findings, hidden behind the word “Nomads”. I laughed, but when in the exposition of the State University of the big city of Donetsk proto-Bulgarian findings were marked in the same way, things became sour. What is so difficult for museum workers to arrange them properly? Lack of scholarly competence or the old complex of the “Soviet citizen”?

Forgive me this unpleasant diversion but I happen to be among the few foreign specialists who have visited many provincial museums in Ukraine.

We relate three archaeological cultures with the presence of proto-Bulgarians in Ukraine – direct or indirect: Pastirsk,

Penkovsk and Saltovo-Mayaytzk. Their names, coming from the region of discovery, are relatively well interpreted and disputable questions cannot be a subject of this paper.

I had the pleasure of working for three years with colleagues, excavating a site from the so-called Saltovo-Mayaytzk culture, in the valley of the river Severskiy-Donetzk in the Donetsk, Lugan, and Harkov regions in Ukraine. They claim that there are more than 2400 sites, mostly settlements and necropolises, connected with proto-Bulgarians.

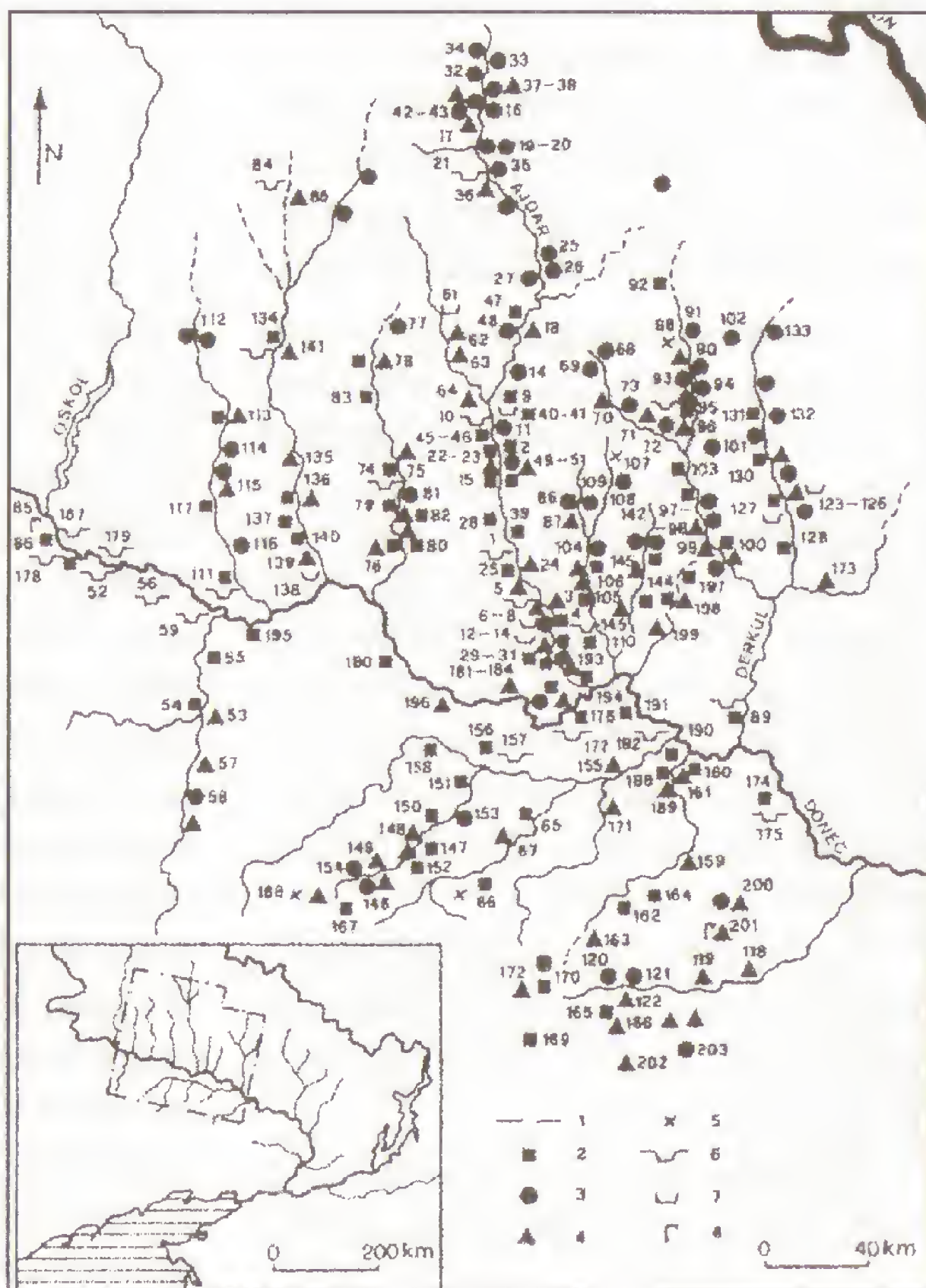
I was shocked by these claims since we know of the well-established theory that under the pressure of the Chazars, after the disintegration of Great Bulgaria, proto-Bulgarians migrated beyond the Danube, in Panonia, and up the Volga River, to create Danubian Bulgaria and Volga Bulgaria. But archaeology is a precise science, dealing with objects. I saw with my own eyes that the traces of destruction in proto-Bulgarian settlements began with the marches of Prince Svetoslav to Sarkel (Belaya Vezha). But the real tragedy struck after the incursions of the Pechenegs and the Kumans (Polovtzi). It turned out that the major mass of proto-Bulgarians remained, living under the Chazar haganate. They led a seminomadic or settled way of life, they were perfect craftsmen and remained in their settlements for centuries, even at the time of the Golden Horde. By the Mayayki village, Slavyansk region, Ukraine, there is a proto-Bulgarian settlement, which is excavated by M.

Shvetzov. The settlement existed from the 7th to the 14th c. It was inhabited predominantly by proto-Bulgarians. We find in their necropolises, without any hiatus, the succession of Pagan, Christian and Moslem burials. And this is not an isolated example...

Still another of my illusions was destroyed – the so-called Dikoe pole (“wild field”), notorious in Russian chronicles, turns out to be the thickest humus I have ever seen. From archaeological point of view it was not “wild” at all. On the contrary. It is the cradle of a rich culture and full of valuable archaeological findings.

As an illustration to this claim I would like to demonstrate an archaeological map, made by Krasilnikov and published in Hungary. Look at it, can that be a “Wild field”?

I am convinced that still more interesting findings will appear in the future, related to Great Bulgaria of Kubrat. Especially round Fanagoria (or probably Poltava?), its capital, and Sarkel – one of the Chazar capitals, built upon a big proto-Bulgarian settlement. If we add to this the famous Humarinsk settlement, with its cyclic building layers - these three centers, connected with proto-Bulgarians, will be places and regions of future archaeological surprises.



Map of the monuments from the so-called Saltovo-Mayatsk culture in the valley of the Seversk-Donetz River, Ukraine

PROTO-BULGARIAN TREASURES IN UKRAINE

This is still another very interesting theme. It is difficult to specify a treasure ethnically – this is known not only by archaeologists, but also by skilled jewelers themselves. And yet this is possible. Many decades had to pass, we had to collect much comparative data in order to claim that the treasures, discovered by the villages of Glodosi, Novi Sandziri at Poltava are proto-Bulgarian.

The first to draw attention to them was the late Prof. Stancho Vaklinov. Thanks to his speculation I was able to reconstruct and rediscover the Voznesensk treasure, discovered by Grinchenko in the 30s and thought to have been destroyed during WWII. It is connected with the hypothetical burial of Khan Asparuh, Kubrat's third son. The founder of Danubian Bulgaria was buried by the banks of the river Dnepr and this must not surprise us. He perished in a battle with the Chazars, in his attempt to restore Great Bulgaria. I have already published papers on that and produced a documentary, with the help of Dnepropetrovsk Television, called "The Silver Eagle of Khan Asparuh". It was shown in Ukraine and in Bulgaria.

I am happy that my theory is supported by a scholar like O. Pritsak, who personally engaged in the deciphering of the monogram of Khan Asparuh, so far interpreted in a wrong way.

The treasure of Glodosi village is shown in the Museum of History in the Kiev-Pechorsk lavra and everyone can see it.

The inscription "Nomads" must not disturb him – the treasure is proto-Bulgarian.

That, about which one can write whole books is the treasure, discovered by the town of Poltava, Ukraine.

THE TREASURE OF MALAYA PERESHCHEPINA

is connected with the burial of Khan Kubrat and is the best testimony to the greatness of Great Bulgaria.

"On June 11, 1912 young shepherds from the Malaya Pereshchepina village dug out from the sand dunes a treasure of gold and silver objects." This is what Count A. Bobrinski writes in volume 34 of "Materials on the Archaeology of Russia", 1914. His publication is on a very high level for its time. We are fortunate that the treasure found its place in the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg.

*Silver Sasanid plate of Shapur II from
Malaya Pereshchepina*





The silver eagle of Khan Asparuh from the treasure of Voznesenska village

It is well preserved and restored, but needs full interpretation and description.

I mentioned that it is the richest treasure from the early Middle Ages in Europe. To show what I mean I will give you one fact: only the casket of Khan Kubrat was covered with 600 gold plates, 5 by 5 cm each! The basic part of the treasure is kept in the so-called Camera for Special Keeping. The objects are so precious. It is kept together with the most famous finding of Scythian and Sarmatian gold. Other objects from the treasure set the beginning of the Sasanid Exposition – the plate of Shapur II. And the heaviest gold amphoras ever found in the world set the beginning of the Byzantine exposition...

But hardly gold is most important for science. The information that these objects offer is really priceless.

The treasure can be provisionally divided into four parts: military spoils; hereditary objects; valuable presents; objects

produced especially for Kubrat.

The military spoils, for example, contain the plate belonging to Patern, the Bishop of Tomi (today the city of Konstanca in Romania).

The gold sword and the regalia, related to the consecration of Kubrat into patrician rank are a present from the Byzantine Emperor Iraklius.

The whole set of gold cups, buckles, belt ornaments, etc, are connected with the so called Pereshchepinsk master, who worked for the ruler Kubrat on order.

For 70 years the treasure from Malaya Pereshchepina remained unnoticed. Due to the efforts of the great German scholar J. Verner it was studied in detail, the analysis was published, and most important – the deciphered monograms proved that it belonged to Kubrat and was related to his burial at Poltava.

It is a pity that this exceptional treasure was discovered accidentally in

Ukraine. Were it found by an archeologist, we would have had priceless information about Kubrat's personality and about Great Bulgaria.

WERE PROTO-BULGARIANS A LITERATE PEOPLE?

If this question were put to me ten years ago I would have smiled condescendingly. But now I can answer with conviction: yes, proto-Bulgarians used runic writing!

It is a well-known fact that in Bulgaria, during the Pagan period of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, state administration used the Greek language. On large stone columns and slabs, which fascinate the contemporary, my predecessors, the Bulgarians, cut their agreements with Byzantium, information about victories and buildings, even literary epigrams like the following: "A man, no matter how well he lives, dies. And another one is born. And the other, born after him, let him know...", etc. These inscriptions

were discovered in the old Bulgarian capitals Pliska and Preslav, in Madara, under the unique for Europe enormous relief of a horseman, piercing a lion with his spear — the well known Madara Horseman, and in other places in the whole ethnic territory of Danubian Bulgaria. These are inscriptions from 7th-9th c., when the disciples of the brothers Cyril and Methodius introduced the Slavonic writing and by the order of Prince Boris I Michael the Old Bulgarian Slavic language displaced Greek in church service and in state administration. This happened exactly 1100 years ago and we commemorated this great event, great not only for us, Bulgarians, but for the entire Slavic world as well.

More than a century ago scholars noticed that old Bulgarian inscriptions with Greek letters and in Greek contained strange words that could be explained neither through Greek, nor through Latin, to say nothing of Slavic. Such proto-Bulgarian words can be seen written in Cyrillic



Proto-Bulgarian graffiti and a runic phrase cut on bone (after Krassilnikov, Lugansk, Ukraine)

or Glagolic letters in texts in Old Bulgarian, as well as cut with unintelligible “strokes and cuts”. By the way the Old Bulgarian writer Chernorizetz Hrabar says in the 10th c. in his work “About the Letters” that earlier, before Cyril and Methodius, the Slavs wrote “in strokes and cuts”. Did proto-Bulgarians also write “in strokes and cuts”, with their own signs of a still unknown system?

Gradually the number of proto-Bulgarian words, written a thousand years ago, grew considerably. These were predominantly titles, names of weapons, calendar terms. Someone, a century ago, pronounced them to be “Turkic”. But linguistic analysis shows that among the 80 or so such words only 4 (four!) are of Turkic origin. Among them are “tarhan” and “kavhan”, words, which are present as borrowings also in Russian and Ukrainian. The laws of the European languages known to us could not explain the rest. Even the title “khan”, stuck by some unfortunate author to the names of many of our rulers of the First Bulgarian State, turned to be...invented! It does not appear as “khan”, not in a single written source. On the contrary, it appears many times as **k a n** or **k a n a**, or as **k a n a s u b i g i**.

Then all rushed to decipher the inscriptions on stone with proto-Bulgarian runes, but, as the saying goes, they struck stone. The proto-Bulgarian runes did not correspond to Turkic runes, in which the famous Orhono-Enisei inscriptions are written. Were we faced with a proto-Bulgarian runic writing, unknown to science?

While I am writing this paper there started a fierce dispute on the discoveries of P. Dobrev, who offered his own system with the help of which he suggested a highly plausible reading of some proto-Bulgarian graffiti. I tried to apply his system to some proto-Bulgarian inscriptions, discovered in Ukraine. But it turns out that I struck stone too... Did the proto-Bulgarians have two runic alphabets?

Then, what kind of proto-Bulgarian inscriptions are those, discovered in Ukraine? They are found at excavation in Sarkel, in the valley of the river Sever Donetzk and the Dnepar. Unfortunately they have not been collected and published yet. Here are some inscriptions of proto-Bulgarian type, discovered on the territory of old Great Bulgaria.

With the permission of Mr. Krasilnikov, archeologist from Lugansk, I present a photo of the proto-Bulgarian graffiti, found by him on bone. Those are not isolated signs, stokes, but whole runic phrases!

It will be very interesting to have the interpretation of these phrases, made by scholars or by lovers of puzzles. How shall we decipher these proto-Bulgarian “strokes and cuts”? I am consciously not suggesting a reading - from right to left or vice versa. Do we have an inverse picture or not... As they say, we are open to wildest suggestions.

INSTEAD OF A SUMMARY

I am far from believing that the theme of proto-Bulgarians and of early Ukraine history is exhausted. On the contrary, I

think that the history of proto-Bulgarians awaits its scholar.

I don't want to quote opinions of Russian and Ukraine scholars now. At symposia they try to prove that the famous Ukraine forelock is the successor of the proto-Bulgarian plait and forelock, that the blood and the anthropology of the Kazaks is half Bulgarian, that... The ethnogenesis of each people is like love – it is a deep secret! We still don't have reliable methods to prove how many drops of the blood of each ethos that crossed our ways do we have.

The Bulgarians of Kubrat are gone. So is Great Bulgaria. But one has to have respect for the earth he treads on, because he is going to become earth himself...

I am not only a historian. I am also a writer. Allow me, instead of a summary, to make a poetic toast to those of our proto-Bulgarian predecessors, who infused blood into the veins of all of us – Bulgarians, Ukrainians, and Russians. And into the blood of many other peoples, whose fate was connected with proto-Bulgarian history.*

Friends, let's drink with our glasses full

Oh, skull covered with pure gold! -
With sparkling wine "To our Fate!" –
To a feast we have been invited.

The living with the dead are feasting now –
The predecessors in death unite.
Listen, drops of blood in our vein play,
In bodies mortal and souls eternal.

Friends, we are the echo of a thunder!
"To the dead! To the living!" – let's drink.
In times to come ourselves we seek
And – a miracle! – our forefathers
we shall meet.

Our land is our blessing!
The rest – "Vanity of vanities!" – so...
Oh, skull, covered with pure gold,
"Let's drink!" – with our blood we
shall fill you.

*Dnepropetrovsk-Sofia
August-November 1993*

* The Article is published in the journal "Chronicles – 2000" 3-4, 1994, Ukraine.

¹ Old Great Bulgaria.

² Great Bulgaria.

³ Anonymous Roman Chronograph from 354.

⁴ Moses Horenski – 5th c.

⁵ Ioanes Antiochenus. Excerpta de insidiis. Magnus Felius Ennodius. Opera

⁶ Marcellinus Comes. Chronicon.

⁷ Weltchronic geschreiben in 334. – Ziezi, from whom Bulgarians originated.

⁸ Добрев, П. Прабългарите - произход, език, култура. С., 1991; Каменната книга на прабългарите, С., 1992

⁹ Димитров, Д. И. Древнобългарское некрополи в Варненском округе. - В сб. Славянство и средиземноморския свят, С., 1973

¹⁰ Ще раз про семантику украинского тризуба - в. Днипро, № 2, м. Днепропетровск

¹¹ Joachim Werner, Der Grabfund von Malaja Perescepina und Kuvrat, Kagan der Bulgaren, Munchen, 1984; Sofia, 1988.

THE CONCEPT OF VOLGA BULGARIANS DURING THE NATIONAL REVIVAL

Dr. RAYA ZAIMOVA

Speaking of the presence and the interpretation of Bulgarian history in West European literature of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, we have to bear in mind a number of approaches.

It is well known that after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the conquering of the Balkans by the Ottoman Empire, many Greek manuscripts were taken to Western Europe and to Italy in particular. In the 14th-15th c. the libraries of the humanists contained Greek and Latin manuscripts, in the first place, which started to be used in historiography with time. Parallel with that, Byzantine historians were included in the translation corpus of the German Volf (16th c.), later in that of the Louver (17th c.), and at the beginning of the 18th c. - in the Venice corpus. I have to remind that this rich collection of documents offers data about the medieval period in the Balkans, but also about their ideological interpretation, in accordance with religion.

Generally speaking, the Bulgarian State in the Balkans and its history are present in works of various types: world histories,

histories of the Roman Empire, history of the Church, of Venice, Poland or Hungary. In a generalized form we can find it in *The Kingdom of the Slavs*, by Mavro Orbini and in *Historia Byzantina* by Charles de Cange of the 17th c.¹

There were two theories about the origins of Bulgarians up to the 18th c.

The Italians Biondo and Sabelico, Doglioni and Tarkanota (15th-16th c.) defined the Bulgarians as Barbarians from Scythia. Leaving Paganism, they were converted to Christianity, they write, and became good Catholics. This characteristic, which disregards their orientation to Eastern Orthodox religion, seems to be most widely spread in West European humanistic historiography.²

¹ Cf. Заимова Р., Българската тема в западноевропейската книжнина (XV-XVII в.), С., Унив. Изд. "Св. Климент Охридски", 1992, and the authors and sources referred to there on pp. 13-16 and 210-217.

² Fl. Biondi, *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum imperii decades tres*. Venetian, 1483. *Decadis prima*, lib. X, pp. 133, 135-137; M. A. Sabellici, *Enneades sive Rhapsodia historiarum* (1486-1504).

Other authors from the second half of the 16th and the 17th c. consider that the Bulgarians originated from the valley of the river Bolga or Volga. The Italians Botero and D'Anana write explicitly in the 16th c. about their Eastern Orthodox cult.³ At the same time Cardinal Baronii and his followers in the *Church Annals*, and de Cange of the 17th c., write in detail about the people, who came from the Volga, according the Byzantine chronicles of Theophanus and Cedrin. As for the religion of the Bulgarians, Baronii and his followers dwell extensively on their wavering between Rome and Constantinople and try to convince the reader that they remained officially faithful to the Pope. In the same time, in *Historia Bizantia* de Cange, who refers to the same Byzantine chronists, offers a more realistic conclusion, confirming their Orthodox persuasion.⁴

It is interesting to mention that Western historiography of the 15th-17th c. does not at all present the Bulgarians as successors

of Noah, as other peoples are presented.⁵ Biblical origin tries to prove how old a people is and the author's interpretations usually relate to important events in Modern times. Bulgarians are mentioned following the data of Byzantine and Latin sources - Theophanus and Nikiphorous, Cedrin, Anastasius the Librarian, Paul the Dean, John the Dean, and others. In the second half of the 17th c., and in the 18th c. in particular, The Royal Library in Paris creates special committees for compiling catalogues of manuscripts and for the translation of Latin and Eastern manuscripts, newly found by missionaries and consuls in Levanta. Erbelo de Molenville, a man of letters, first makes a list of Arabic manuscripts, the travelers Teveno and de Cange work on Greek ones, etc. In the 20s of the 18th c., in the time of abbot Binion, a librarian, the committee is extended with other translators from Turkish, Old Bulgarian, Persian, Chinese, Armenian, Russian, Tartar, and other languages. The oriental scholar Joseph de Guinne substitutes Fourmont in the capacity of translator from Eastern languages and this helps him to publish *History of the Huns* in 1756.⁶

Paris, 1513-1517, Ennea. VIII, lib. VI, fol. CLXXXIr; *Compendio storico universale di tutte le cose notabilia successe nel mondo...* di Gio, Nicolo Doglioni. Venetia, 1594, p. 218; *Delle historie del mondo* di M. Gio. Tarchagnota... Venetia, 1580, p. 190 r.

³ Botero, *Relationi Universali*. Roma, 1591; Bergamo, 1596, lib. I, part I; G. L. D'Anania, *L'Universale Fabrica del mondo overo Cosmografia*. Venetia, 1596.

⁴ C. Baroni, *Annales ecclesiastic. T. 8, coll. 646. Romae, 1598-1607; Византийска история. История на империята на Цариград от Шарл Дю Канж, Предг., състав. и прев. от старофр. Р. Заимова, състав. и прев. от лат. М. Кускинова, ред. В. Търкова. С., Агрес, 1992, p. 30.*

⁵ To a creation extent the Italian scholar from Florence Benedetto Dei (XV c.) reminds of a connection between Noah's son Yaphet and Bulgaria by saying that the land in Europe fell to Yaphet. He, however, does not mention the genealogy with the sons of Yaphet, which Oriental scholars from the 18th c. study: Danova P. *La Bulgarie et les Bulgares dans la chronique de Benedetto Dei (1418-1492)*. – *Etudes balkaniques*, 1-2, 1997, pp. 176-178.

⁶ Omont H., *Mabillon et la Bibliotheque du Roi a la fin du VIIe s. Liguge (Vienne)*, 1908; Blechet Fr., *Les interpretes orientalistes de la Bibliotheque du Roi*. – In: *Istanbul et les langues'o*, L'Harmattan, 1997, pp. 89-100.

I am paying special attention to these activities, connected with the translation of Eastern texts, because the oriental scholars Erbelo de Molenville and Joseph de Guinne collected written evidence directly from the East and distanced themselves from historiographic interpretations, based on Byzantine sources. That is why Erbello's book, *Oriental Library*, from 1697, introduces an entirely new view of the Bulgarians that differed from that of Western historiographers.

Erbello writes about the Bulgarians several times in his voluminous work. He refers to the Persian Mir-Cavand (or Mircond) from the 15th c. and to the Medieval Arab geographers Al-Bergendi and Ben-Alvardi.

Here is what he says: "Bulgar and Bular is the name of a large northern country, situated east of the big river Ra, called Volga now, and Bulgar before that... Gaz, son of Yaphet, defeated his brother Turk in war and was forced to retreat to the valley of the river Bulgar and settle there... Another son of Yaphet, Gomari or Gomer, made his way to the same river, where he settled and gave birth to two sons. One he called Bulgar and the other Bertas. Each one of them built a town in his name... Round the year 500 AD these peoples passed into Dacia and Moesia, where they became famous under the name of Bulgarians."

Erbello also supplies some interpretations of the name "Bulgari", mentions in passing their Christian religion, and says that in his time (end of 17th c.) this people was under the rule of the Sultan. It is inter-

esting that Erbello mentions the Volga River as the land of origin of the Bulgarians, as the starting point of their migration. He does not make a difference between the Volga Bulgarians, whom he describes as being Muslim, and those ("in his time") from Moesia and Thrace. In the same time, thanks to the Eastern sources, he introduces in Western historiography the moment of the Biblical origin of the Bulgarians.⁷

This version of the origin is also shared by Joseph de Guinne in his *History of the Huns* from 1756, written after Chinese, Arab, and other Eastern sources, consciously disregarding Byzantine sources.⁸

The Biblical origin and the Portland of the Bulgarians near Volga are also mentioned by De la Croix in *Short History of the Ottoman Empire* from 1786.

It is interesting to note that Oriental tradition attributes an eighth son to Yaphet, called Gaz or Goz. His own son settled at the Volga River and set the beginning of the Bulgarian people.¹⁰

What is more, we can learn from the French authors from the 17th-18th c. that

⁷ Herbelot de Molainville, *Bibliothèque Orientale*. Paris, 1697, pp. 214-215.

⁸ *Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mongols et des autres Tartares occidentaux et avant et depuis Jesus-Christ jusqu'à présent... Ouvrage tiré des livres chinois et des manuscrits orientaux de la Bibliothèque du Roi par M. Deguignes de L'Académie royale des Inscriptions et Belle-Lettres*. T. 1. A Paris, Chez Desaint et Saillant, 1756, p. I-IX.

⁹ De la Croix, *Abregé d'histoire ottomane*. t. 1. Paris, 1768, p. 3.

¹⁰ Стоянов В., *Bulgaro-Turcica 3: Историја на изучаването на "Codex Cumanicus"*. – Историческо бъдеще, 1, 1997, pp. 42-90.

the Bulgarian and the Turkic people are related, contrary to what we read in their contemporary Paisiy.¹¹

This conception, the result of access of Western men of letters to Eastern texts, spreads in the historiography of the Enlightenment, which at the same time denies all legends, mysteries and the Bible as historical sources of knowledge.¹² In the 18th c., parallel to the claims of Baronii and de Cange, this conception is popular in the works of Le'Beau and Blasius Kleiner, for example.¹³ Almost at the same time this conception is changed with Charles-Claud Peyssonnel, who, under the influence of the new ideas of discovering truth by means of the critical method, tries to prove that the peoples that migrated from north to south in Europe, irrespective of their origin, accepted the Slavic language. In his work *Observations historiques et géographiques sur les peuples barbares qui ont habité les bords du Danube et du Pont-Euxin* from 1765 Peyssonnel relies on various sources – Greek, Latin and Eastern, but also on the works of his predecessors de Cange, Erbello, and de Guinne. The

French scholar and consul tried to give some kind of valuation of the great number of ethnoses, who attacked Byzantium. For the Bulgarians he writes: "...it is more probable that the river [Volga] took its name from Bulgaria or Volgaria...", that the Bulgarians "...adopted in their new territories [i.e. in the Balkans] the Slavic language".¹⁴ According to him, the Slavic language spread among the Bulgarians after the Christianization in the 9th c. But asking himself the question who were these Barbarians, he explains that they were called by the common name of **Scythians**, after the name of the region, from which they came to the Danube. Obviously he drew this information from one type of sources, because in other writings he renounces this claim and explains that the Bulgarians bear the name of the country from which they came – "Great Bulgaria". In other words, for him Bulgaria of Kubrat and Volga Bulgaria is one and the same thing. As is well known, Volga Bulgaria was annexed by the Moscow Principality as early as the middle of the 16th c.¹⁵ But for Peyssonnel it still exists at the time of his life, i.e. it is alive as a state in the 18th c.: "Great Bulgaria, which is today the Bulgar Kingdom, is situated east of the Volga river, between the Kazan Kingdom and that of Astrahan."¹⁶

¹¹ Пайсий Хилендарски, *История славяноболгарская*, 1762. Увод, новобълг. текст и ком. Б. Райков. С., Наука и изкуство, 1972, р. 30.

¹² Mousnier R., - E. Labrousse, *Le XVIIIe siècle. L'époque des Lumières (1715-1815)*. Paris, PUF, 6e ed., 1985, p. 58 sq.

¹³ Подробни и нови издирвания по старата българска история според знаменития француски историк le Beau от француската академия. Събрал и превел от оригинала Д-р Хр. Т. Стамболски. С., 1914; Блазиус Клайнер, *История на България*. С., БАН, 1977.

¹⁴ Peyssonnel Ch. *Observations historique et géographiques sur les peuples barbares qui ont habité les bords du Danube et du Pont-Euxin*. Paris, 1765, p. 30.

¹⁵ Cf. references in: Moravcsik Gy., *Byzantino-turcica*. Berlin, 1958, pp. 126-131.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

Several times in his book the scholar tries to identify the land of origin of Bulgarians. In addition to the Volga river, he goes back even to the sons of Noah. But, as different from Erbello, de Cange and de la Croix, he claims kinship between Slavs and Bulgarians, presenting them as sons of Yaphet's son – Alan, who is said to have come to Europe from Asia. His sources are not Eastern, as those of his contemporaries, but Bohemian (Czech) and Polish annals. His motives are different from those of Paisiy and aim at confirmation of the already existing theory that the Slavic language was accepted by the Bulgarians, whose origin, most probably, was non-Slavic. Looking for arguments, Peyssonnel destroys the Biblical genealogy, saying that it looks like Rablet's giants and "without roaming in times so remote, it seems to me more reasonable to consider the origin of these peoples, known and proved by history."¹⁷

Again within the pattern of historiography of the Enlightenment, Peyssonnel describes the Barbarians as "civilized" or "uncivilized". Some of his contemporaries use as a criterion the climate or their martial spirit, the trade or religion of the ethnos. The French scholar starts from religion and takes Christianity of Bulgarians as a measure of "civilized nature", while the Pagans, who were a different part of the Bulgarians, obviously remained "uncivilized".

The reinterpretation of history by the Enlightenment demonstrates a number of things:

First, how the acquisition of Eastern sources and culture at the end of the 17th c. broadened the scope of knowledge about peoples of the East and more specifically, about Bulgarians before the foundation of their State in the Balkans.

Second, the approach to historical sources changed the traditional humanistic conception of Bulgarians, based primarily on Byzantine and Latin historiography.

Third, the Medieval Eastern conception of Bulgarians as an ancient people, descendents of Noah and his sons, was picked up by Western scholars in a moment when the Bible and legends tended to be purposefully denied as historical sources.

Fourth, the theory about language, as a defining factor of origin, was reflected in the interpretation of the origin of Bulgarians, who settled by the Danube.

These conceptions of the Enlightenment developed in Western Europe parallel with early Bulgarian historiography. It is not yet possible to find any direct relationship between the one and the other. It is important that by the 18th c. Europe had experienced an evolution in its understanding of the old inhabitants of the continent and created its own view of Bulgarians, while Bulgarian historiography at that time was making its first steps. In this sense, at the end of the 20th c., our historiography has not yet walked the long way of research and reformulation of history in accordance with time.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. XXXIV-XXXV.

THE YURT – AN ARCHITECTURAL PHENOMENON OF ANCIENT BULGARIANS

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“Esgiy ger” in Mongolian, “kiyiz ui” in Turkic languages, “yurt” in European: this is the home of the nomads, widely spread in the Near East and Central Asia, in which they find shelter from summer heat, from winds and rain, from winter cold. This is a home, built in the vast steppe, where there are no forests.

“The available information about the cosmological and cosmogonic meaning of the yurt and its constructive components...explains the interest in this, according to some scholars, “primitive” building, from the point of view of archeoastronomy”. At the same time, data about the participation of the **Bugler** people in the Hun tribal union in Central Asia until the era of the Great Migration and the remains of yurt-like homes along the routes of migration of Bulgars to the territory of Medieval Danubian Bulgaria motivate the necessity to study this part of the culture of

the creators of the Bulgarian State. The information that we have about the cosmological conceptions of the nomadic horse-breeders of Central Asia reveal a picture of the world, according to which man is only part of the Universe... The conceptions about its structure find expression in the cosmogram, known later as **mandala**: double cross – main and subsidiary – for the four cardinal points and the transitional points, with a well-marked center, and a projection of a fifth vertical axis (*Fig. 1*).

The innumerable modifications of this graphic model of the Universe and its wide application in everyday life and art of the nomadic horse-breeders indicate that it was taken as a symbolic sign, by means of which to achieve **harmony** with the visible world. It served to orient the yurt as to the four cardinal points... it was drawn on the sites of future buildings.



Fig. 1. Mandala – a cosmogram, graphic model of the Universe, a symbolic sign, by means of which to achieve harmony with the visible world

The Mandala, in a most general sense, is a universal model of the Universe, which includes Cosmos (the macrocosm) and Man (the microcosm). It is the basic element of a process by which, through dedications, one can enter the space of the mandala, and by means of it, acquire spontaneous knowledge too. Major accent is put on the methodology of transformation of psychophysical components of man, by means of meditation on pure creatures (gods) in a pure environment (mandala). The gods, who inhabit the mandala, are not external gods. They are rather symbols of the enlightened state of mind that each human being can acquire.

Each aspect of the mandala bears meaning and no detail is arbitrary. The “lotus” family in the center of the mandala transforms passion into identifying knowledge. The five psychophysical components

are distributed in the following way: in the east – form; in the south – sensation; in the west – perception; in the north – component factors; and in the center – mind. The center is the seat of the mind, which must be expanded in the four directions. In this way one could discover the true center, which allows each person to find his own self. This is not a search for transcendental knowledge as something different from the searcher: this is a way to achieve total identification of reality with the personality.

The yurt itself is a model of the Universe. The spatial organization of the yurt follows mentally the mandala and the twelve calendar subdivisions. The overall number of ribs, supporting the roof construction is 60 – as many as the minutes in an hour and the years in a calendar cycle. The round frame above the smoke opening (*tono*) has the form of mandala. The roof itself is decorated with a mandala. The three cosmograms, situated one over the other, construct the vertical axis: the link *Earth-Cosmos*, the link *past-present*. The smoke-opening of the yurt is some kind of an observatory. Through its frame the inhabitants of the yurt can watch and register the motion of the heavenly bodies.

Practical necessity and cultural expedience made inhabitants adapt the size of the yurt to one module and to unify all details. The weight of the yurt, together with the furniture, is about 300-400 kg. Its diameter is about 4,5-8 m. Its height in the center is 4-5 m. One small yurt can be put together in an hour. The constructive volume of the yurt consists of 9 major parts.

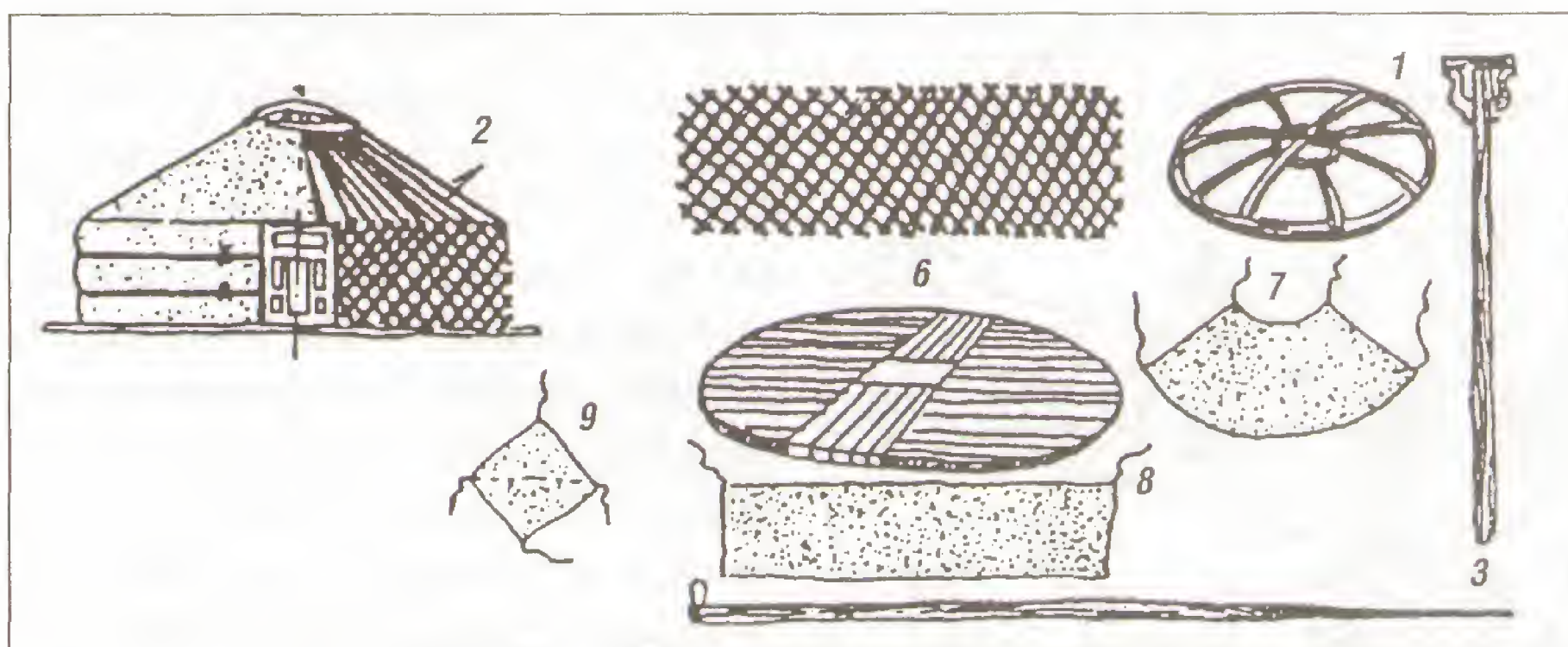


Fig. 3 Elements of the yurt: 1. Smoke-opening – tono; 2. Ribs of the roof construction; 3. Grids of the walls; 6. Floor construction; 7. Upper cloth for covering the roof construction (pressed wool); 8. Side cloth; 9. Closure of the smoke-opening.

The walls are wooden grids, which can be connected. They determine the capacity of the home. The roof construction is an arch. It is made of ribs, which meet in the center by means of a special circle – tono (*Fig. 3*). In their lower end the ribs touch the grid “walls”. On the outside the yurt is “dressed” in wool, “cut” to its form. To secure anti-sepsis, the wool is soaked in a mixture of yogurt, tobacco and salt.

The interior space of the yurt is divided arbitrarily into 12 parts, which correspond to the 12-month calendar of ancient Bulgarians. Each part is named after a month. The western side of the yurt is called “the monkey side”. The northern side, where the red, official niche is situated, is called “the mouse side”. The eastern side is “the hare side” and the southern side is “the horse side” (*Fig. 4*). Internal space is organized pragmatically and with definite purpose. The interior is a unified, holistic

architectural space, with no strict boundaries but with well-defined functional zones. These functional zones determine the internal rhythm of life of the inhabitants. In the red niche – across the entrance, is the place of the chests, which keep the treasury of the family. Above them there are sculptures and drawings of the gods, protectors of the family. The fire is in the middle of the yurt. The right side (as to the entrance) is the female half. The left one is the male half. The color and graphic symbolism of the ornament round the entrance door represents hospitality and good wishes to visitors, who enter the home, and to the hosts.

As an artificially constructed organized space, isolated from the ambience, with the purpose to achieve an amiable climate in the interior, the yurt nevertheless seems part of nature. Similar to the way in which the flora of the steppe reacts to variations in



Fig. 4 Orientation and zone division of the yurt according to the four cardinal points and the calendar of ancient Bulgarians:

Northern side – side of the mouse

Southern side – side of the horse

Western side – side of the monkey

Eastern side – side of the hare

temperature, the yurt also responds to changes. Its construction, consisting of wooden beams, laths and “breathing” wool, plays its role of thermoregulator, preserving the stable comfort of the interior.

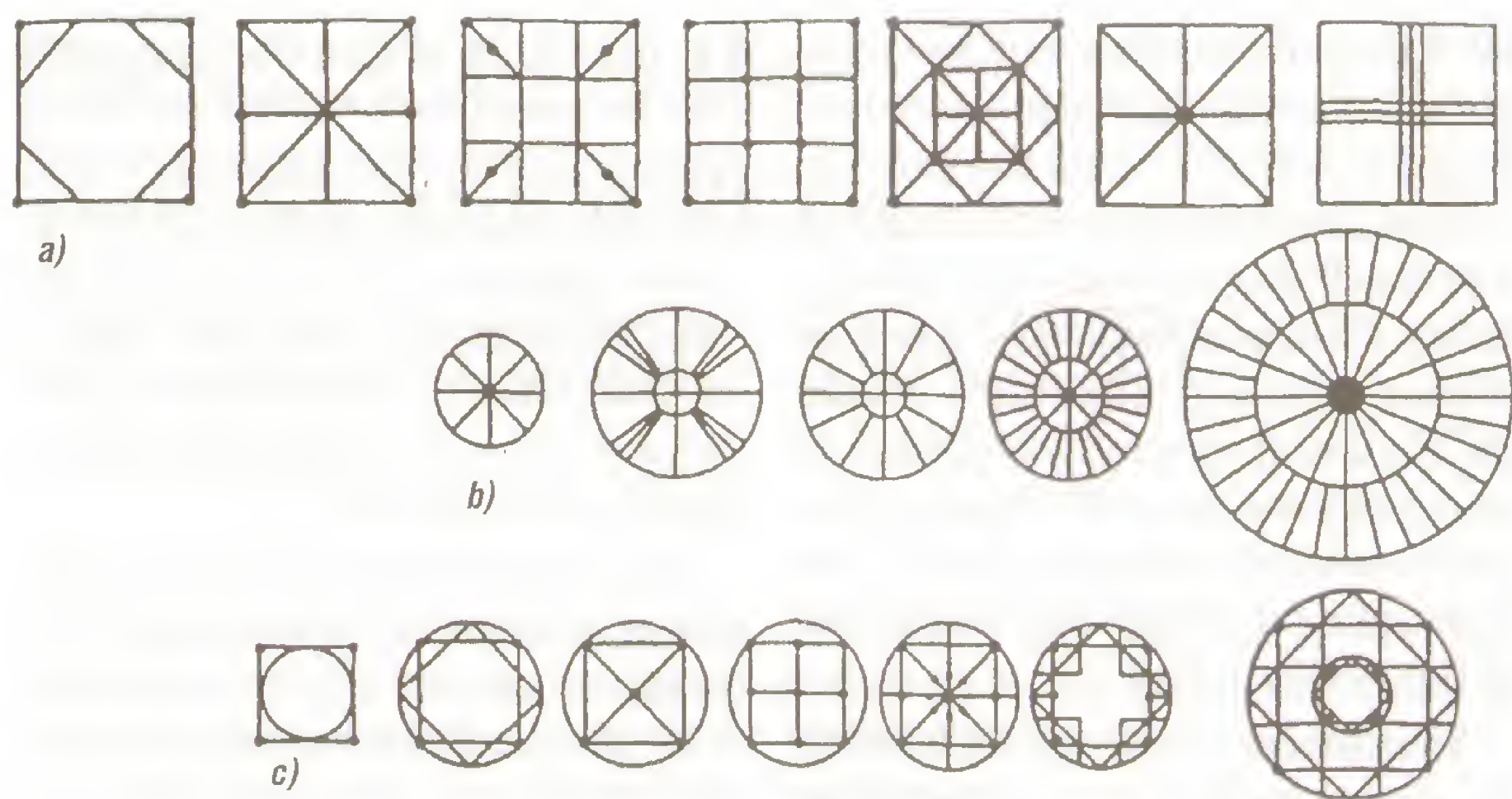
The yurt is always situated in a place, open to the sun. Even when it is in a woody place, the builders choose a meadow to build it on. This is related to the fact that the entire farming activity of its inhabitants is subordinated to the cycle of the sun. The angle of the sunrays, piercing through the tono, shows the exact time of the day.

The erection of the yurt has its strictly determined phases: 1. Construction of the floor after serious consideration of the spot

on which to build the yurt; 2. Construction of the doors; 3. Unfolding of the grid-walls; 4. Embracing the “walls” with belts; 5. Putting up the tono; 6. Connecting the tono with the grid-walls; 7. Connecting parts are covered with cloth; 8. The whole yurt is covered with cloth; 9. Lower parts of the yurt are secured with strips that form a “plinth”. The floor consists of 17 parts, which are stuck together or are connected by means of braces. The door and the windows are always situated leeward. The additional internal props are either 12 or 18. They secure stability of the construction (Fig. 5). The slant of the roof construction is usually 30°. With the small yurts the ratio between the height of the “ground floor” and the height of the roof construction is 1:1. With big yurts the height of the roof construction is 2-3 times greater than that of the “ground floor”. The space under the roof participates in the entire useful capacity of the home or the cult structures. Considering a location for the yurt, whether home or temple, builders take into account unfavorable winds, movement of the sun in the concrete scenery, the presence of underground waters, etc. The yurts are arranged in a circle so that the animals can be protected in the center during the night. This arrangement had a defense function as well.

The vitality of the yurt, which survived through the years as a perfect construction, is due to the simplicity of its setting up, to its cold-proof and wind-proof qualities, and its streamlined form.

Having in mind that in antiquity in Cen-

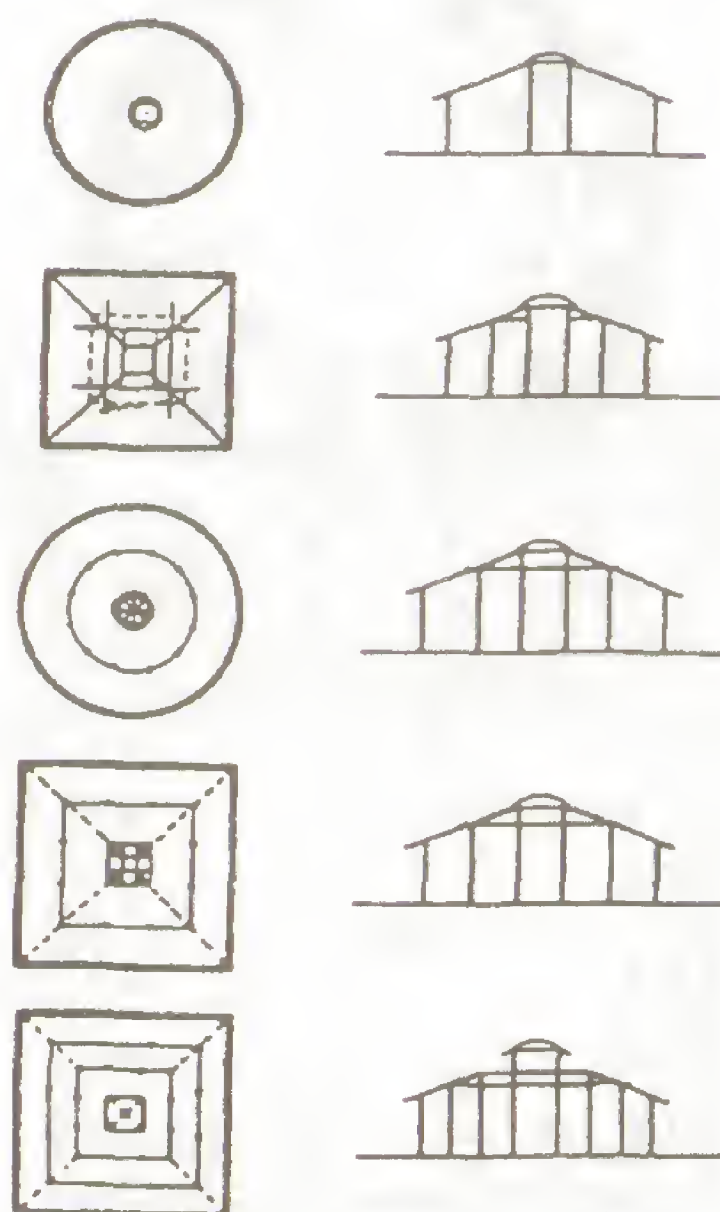


*Fig. 5 Construction of the yurt (according to Mairdar)
Types of tonos: a) square; b) circular; c) combination of a square and a circle*

tral Asia there were yurt-like cult buildings, we can make the connection between the architectural phenomenon considered above – the yurt, and the Preslav Circular Church. One of the most interesting but not well studied aspects of the Circular Church in Preslav (*Fig. 2*) is the synthesis of ancient Bulgarian and Christian elements. Analysis of the architecture of the Circular Church shows that its plan rests on the old conceptions of ancient Bulgarians about the Universe. In the views of the peoples of the Hunor confederation (whose core were the Bulgars), the visible part of the Universe divides into four major and four secondary parts.

Its structure is represented by means of the cosmic mandala. This sign is widely used in everyday life and the art of ancient Bulgarians. For them, it was a sym-

Plan and cross-section of circular and square yurt-temples



bol of achieving harmony with the visible world, a cosmogram that presented the Bulgarian notions of space and time. We discover the mandala also in the magic rosette from Pliska, on which are written the names of the seven luminaries, respected in the old mythology of the Hunno-Bulgarians. As is well known, our predecessors used a calendar of a 12-month cycle, whose external concentric circle – the circle of the sun's rotation, is divided into 12 signs of the zodiac.

The Circular (Golden) Church in Preslav is an example of the unique synthesis of ancient Bulgarian and Christian elements. This synthesis is a confirmation of

continuity, from Tangrism to Christianity, in Bulgarian national identity. In a metaphysical plan these two religions are symbols of the two forces, acting upon our true selves. Tangrism gives us our specificity and is the road to one's own self – through self-concentration. Christianity gives us universality and is the road to the world – through communication.

The ancient Bulgartian yurt is an architectural phenomenon and has developed through the ages under the direct influence of the cosmological and cosmogonic conceptions and astronomical knowledge of its creators. It forms the basis, on which architecture in this region developed – yurt-like ritual and civil buildings, adopting from it the entire cosmological and astronomical content. The characteristic features of this mobile architecture, with all its symbols and meanings, were transferred to Europe by ancient Bulgarians.

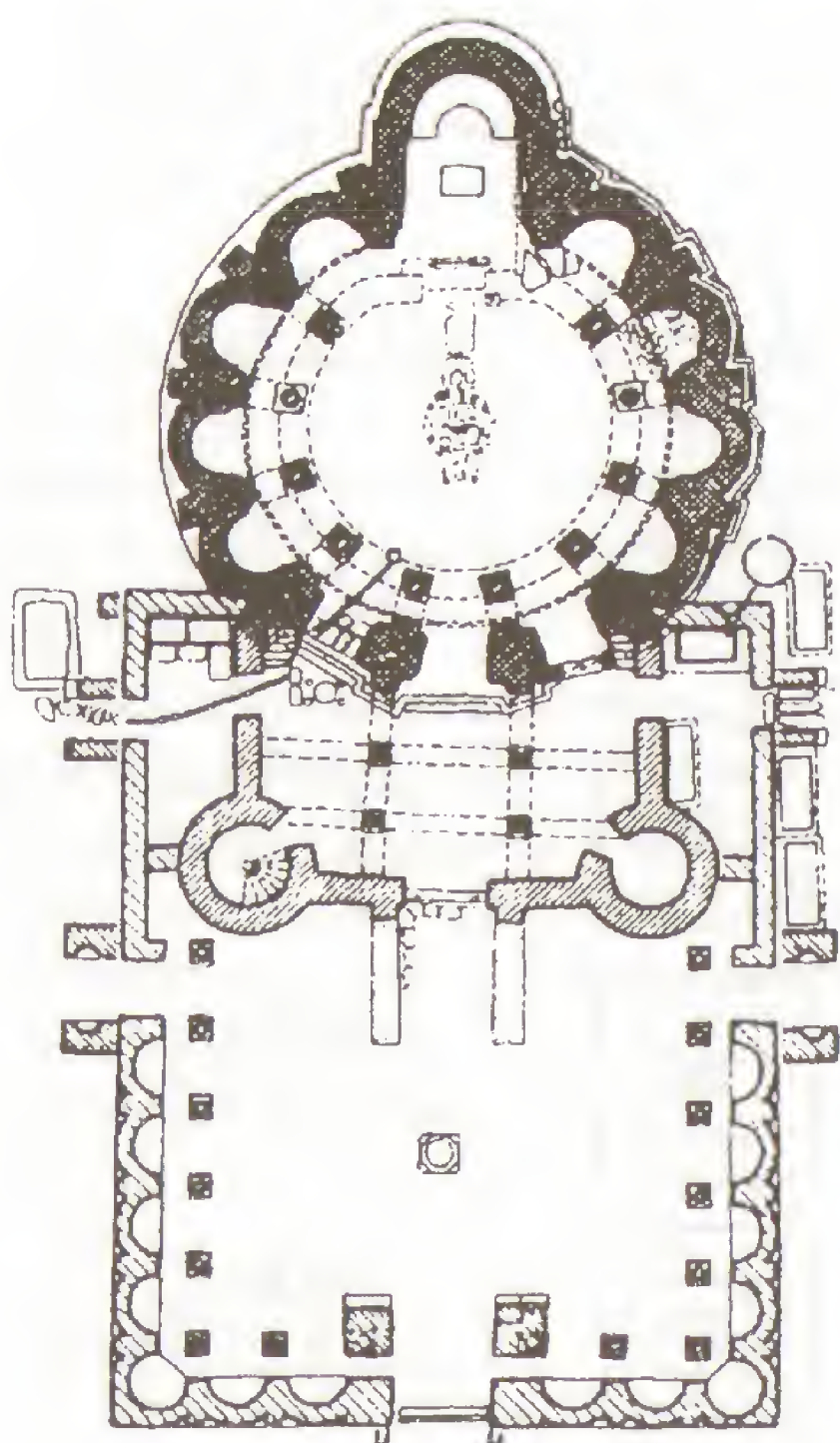


Fig. 2. Plan of the Circular Church in Preslav after the excavations in 1978 (according to St. Boyadziev)

FIRST STEPS IN THE SLAVIZATION OF BULGARIAN SOCIETY

Prof. Dr. Georgi Bakalov

With this paper, I would like to express my standpoint and formulate a problem, behind which a number of unsolved questions of Bulgarian historiography are hidden. I have in mind the historical *relations between Bulgarians and Slavs in 6th-10th c.* and their role and impact on the formation of the Bulgarian nation, culture and consciousness. Like any *theoretical* and, in this sense, preliminary formulation of the problem, I shall draw the attention to the *major tendencies and processes* without going into details.

The first impression in approaching this problem is its pronounced *ideological* load. Usually the Bulgarian ethnos is conceived of as an inseparable part of the Slavic linguistic, historical, cultural and anthropological community. Taken in this way, the thesis of the undisputed domination of the Slavic element leaves open a number of questions, which demonstrate considerable differences from the Slavic cultural and historical tradition and the closeness of the Bulgarian ethnic and cultural element to other non-Slavic communities.

It **does not** necessarily follow from this claim that today's Bulgarians have nothing

in common with the Slavs. It rather follows that they were a composite ethnic and historical product, containing **also** a Slavic component.

Until quite recently the argument in favor of the pro-Slavic thesis was the language, which no doubt belonged to the family of the Slavic languages. It is obvious that during the 9th-10th c. Bulgarians create a literary norm of the literary language, used by southern and eastern Slavs, called by most scholars *Slavic-Bulgarian*. It cannot be denied that this language serves to a very high extent as a factor for determining the ethnos, much more so than religious denomination. An example of this are not only Bulgarians, converted to the Muslim faith, but also many nations of long history like, for example, the nations of the Spanish-speaking group or the German-speaking Germans, Austrians and Swiss.

A brief look at the events that followed the foundation of the Bulgarian State on this side of the Danube shows *the indisputable domination of the Bulgarian ethnic, cultural, and political element* during its first two centuries. The name of the State and its supreme power is **Bul-**

garia and **Bulgarian**, for its citizens and for the international community. This is one of the rare exceptions in Europe of the early Middle Ages. The Byzantines, who observed their northern neighbors directly and relatively objectively, *clearly distinguish* between Bulgarians and Slavs. We can judge by indirect data that Bulgarians were the core of the State administration and the command of the army, while the Slavs had internal autonomy and performed auxiliary administrative, military and political functions. This is not the right place to start again the discussion about the unitary, federative or monolith nature of the State in the 7th-9th century. As for me, I would rather give preference to the *union*, a form of the State, in which Bulgarians and Slavs were balanced with respect to social self-determination and political competence.

This thesis has of course its anti-thesis. It boils down to two points:

1. Reading the meaning of Theophanus' phrase about the relationships between Bulgarians and Slavs as ὑπὸ πᾶκτον ὄντας: if the word πᾶκτον can be interpreted as "yoke" (or under yoke, subjugation), it means that the local Slavs in Moesia and Dacia were forcefully subjugated, which is a factor for building up tension.

2. The uprising of Timochani and Abodriti against the rule of Khan Omurtag and their passing under Frankish jurisdiction.

3. The voluntary emigration of considerable masses of Slavic population (about

200 000-220 000 people) to Byzantium in the second decade of the 9th century.

4. The creation of a centralized administrative and territorial system, headed by komitas, coming from the Bulgarian aristocracy.

5. The decision of Prince Boris to replace the governor of Bulgarian origin with a Slav in order to aid the functioning of Kliment in the establishment of Slavic education in Macedonia.

Without seeking other arguments in favor of the above thesis, we can detect tension and opposition of the two ethnoses. If we also add the explicit mention in the Chatalar inscription that Khan Omurtag turned his army against "Greeks and Slavs", it is obvious that the two communities were in a relation of victors against enslaved, of masters against subjugated.

The question naturally arises: how was it possible, in the presence of such conflict, the strong pressure from Byzantium, and the growing tension among the Slavic population in the country, for the young Bulgarian State to survive? How did the two ethnoses blend so quickly and so easily after the Conversion and the formation of the Medieval Bulgarian nation? Was it only the religious difference that strengthened the tension?

It is obvious that similar interpretations do not lead to a resolution. To my mind, we have visible differences of language, mentality, religion, way of life, also noticed by Byzantine authors, and *agreement* and unity in matters of foreign policy, internal

order, and interaction in everyday communication. Here again, as in other similar cases, it is wrong to follow one singular line of thinking.

An important component in the relationships between the two ethnic communities is their internal and external balance. It is difficult to offer precise data about the relative number of Bulgarian and the Slavic population. But the answer to this question will formulate the possibility for *population and demographic domination* of the one ethnic element or the other. In any case, the hypothesis, so popular until recently, about the sparsity of the Bulgarian horde, which dissolved in the "Slavic sea" of the local population, is artificial and cannot settle the problem of the origins and character of the Bulgarian people.

By comparative data from Byzantium, results of archeological findings, and determining the relative density of settlements, we can presume that the territory of Bulgarian settlement had a population of about **one million and a half**. In this case the correct question must be: what is the share of Bulgarians, Slavs and the remnants of the local population?

The defeat of the Byzantine army at the Onglos and the following defeats in north-eastern Bulgaria and northern Thrace in 680-681 cannot be the deed of a small, though mobile horde. The Bulgarians had against them Emperor Constantine IV Pogonat - one of the most experienced Byzantine military commanders, with well known abilities and strategic thinking. This means that an army of about 60 to 80 thou-

sand requires for its recruiting a population at least 10 times larger. If we admit that one independent Slavic tribe has about 10000 people and knowing of 30-35 tribes, to whom we add the numbers of the local population, the number of Bulgarians and the rest of the population was almost equal. To this sum we must add the Bulgarians, who settled here before Asparuh, and Kuber's horde in the Pelaginian field.

Let me repeat that **these numbers are relative**. More important is the global ratio, which, in view of the arguments given above, should not be in detriment of the Bulgarians.

If we follow the logic of the theses stated above, we must admit that, under the circumstances, Bulgarians and Slavs had a *relatively equal* demographic potential but the State and its rule were entirely in the hands of the Bulgarians. This ensures for them indisputable priority till the middle of the 9th century.

Then, what is the starting point and the mechanism of Slavization of Bulgarian society?

Thus we reach the event, which holds a key position with respect to our problem - **the Conversion in 864-865**.

The Christianization of any society within the orbit of Byzantium is always followed by the use of a literature, without which the liturgic cycle of the Christian cult is unthinkable. For Byzantium the conversion of the population of adjacent territories was not a spontaneous event, but a

deep and carefully prepared policy of incorporation. In view of the plan-minimum, connected with the Slavs, who, in the 9th century, were a considerable majority in and out of the territory of Bulgaria, Byzantium prepared for its mission of Christianization literature created in their language.

The deeds of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius and their early canonization are an important factor in the deization of their mission. The pride in the writing, created by the "holy men", overflows from all early works, written in the Slavic language. The apology of Slavic-Bulgarian speech by Chernorizetz Hrabar is only one among many typical examples in this respect. In the context of the Christian idea of rebirth through baptizing, the Bulgarian neophytes feel themselves born again and akin to Christianity through the words of the holy brothers and their disciples, and these words are Slavic. In the exclamation "hear you, all Slavic people" or "fly, you Slavic people, to the knowledge of the Christian teaching" we can detect a shared feeling, which inevitably builds self-consciousness in the context of the Slavic community.

Bulgarians are aware that with the introduction of the Slavic alphabet, parallel with the old Greek and Latin languages, they set the foundations of a new, Christian culture in Europe.

The foundation of an independent Church and the introduction of the Slavic-Bulgarian writing in church service, the office of the ruler and the official correspon-

dence this time *give priority* to the Slavic component. What is due to Bulgarian historical heritage is compensated by the name of the ethnos, BULGARIANS, which remained forever unchanged.

The Slavization of Bulgarian society, provoked by the Conversion and the following Christianization and written culture, relate the starting point of this process to the second half of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th century. The Golden Age of King Simeon and King Peter reconfirm the Slavic word in the literary culture of Bulgarians. This is the most visible exponent of this cultural phenomenon. Spoken Bulgarian, not present in official writings is dying out, but on its way out it leaves deep marks in the newly formed Slavic-Bulgarian language. The great number of doublets for one and the same notion, which are lacking in other Slavic languages, speak of the strong influence of old Bulgarian speech.

Until the end of the First Bulgarian Kingdom in 1018 *the traces of the ancient culture* of the forefathers are very deep. They can be found in State institutions, where the Byzantine influence is restricted to the competence of the ruler, in everyday life, in dress, military tactics and social behavior. In their conception of the Bulgarians, the Byzantines clearly distinguish the differences in these spheres, characterized by the general term "Barbarian".

I would like to point to another fact. The deeper the Christianization of Bulgarian society goes, the closer it gets to the paragons of Byzantine culture and moves

away from its own roots. In the past, this was noticed by Prof. P. Mutaфchiev, who pointed to Christianization as the factor for the degradation of our militant spirit and the Bulgarian statesmanship. Today, this position has as many adherents as does the thesis that the fall of the Roman Empire is due to the affluence and high standard of living that undermined the strict morals and the ethics of Roman society. Or that the Romans lost their empire because they drank wine from cups made of lead, which accumulated poison in the organism with time.

Obviously we must speak of a whole complex of factors and tendencies in the development, which follow certain rules.

As a generalization, I must say that *Slavization* or change of priorities in the development of Bulgarian society **is the consequence of Christianization** and is intricately related with **Slavic writing**. We can notice something similar in Western Europe. So far as the culture of the peoples of this region is unified, it is the result of a long influence of Latin and the monopoly of the Church, which makes use of it.

In our case the rudiments of language, customs and family cultivation are the link with our roots. But the Slavic element has become so deeply Bulgarian and historically internalized. Thus, the answer to the question - what is our origin - cannot be unambiguous.

It is our duty to give each component of our eventful past its due and to accept that there are no pure races, no pure na-

tions, communities, or languages. In this diversity lies the essence of the beauty and the unity of the human race.

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